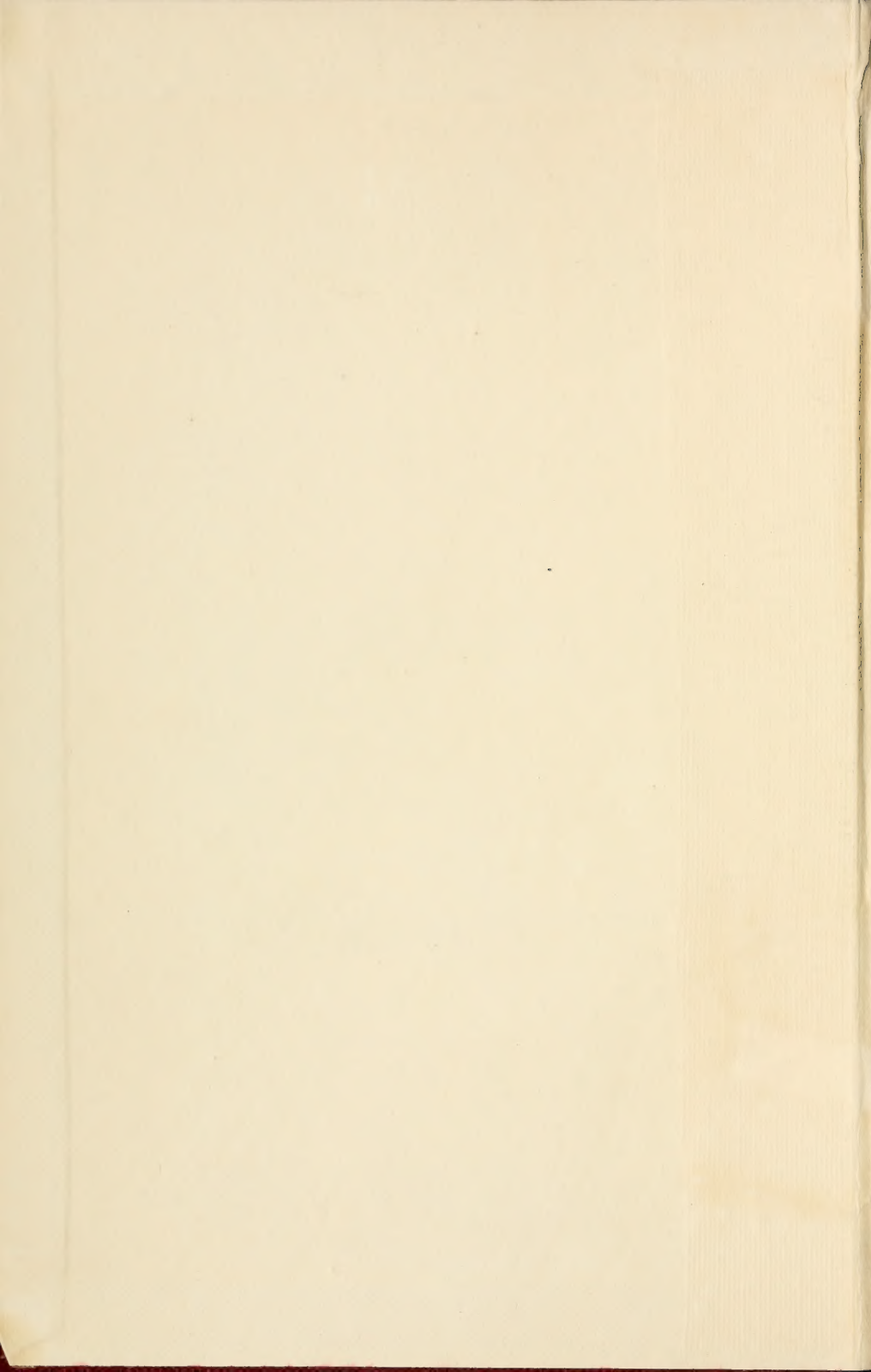


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THE KAISER'S LETTERS TO THE TSAR

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THE KAISER AND THE CZAR ABOARD THE "HOHENZOLLERN."

[Frontispiece.]

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THE KAISER'S LETTERS TO THE TSAR

COPIED FROM GOVERNMENT ARCHIVES IN
PETROGRAD, AND BROUGHT FROM RUSSIA BY

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HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LIMITED LONDON

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INTRODUCTION

THE personality and statecraft of the ex-Emperor William II deeply engross public attention at the moment and will undoubtedly continue to do so in the years to come. For even if he were a man of common mould his close association with the greatest tragedy in the history of the world will for ever secure him a place in that strangely assorted gallery of personages to whom history in its wayward fashion deigns to accord immortality. The stage was so magnificent, the drama so sombre and superb, that even the meanest actor must have gained something from his surroundings. But the ex-Kaiser was no mediocrity. He had personality, charm, vision, and versatility. He was tremendously interested in a vast number of subjects, and he knew just enough about them never to be grotesque and not enough ever to be dull.

Additional light has been thrown in recent months on the character and designs of this extraordinary man. The Kautsky revelations, which have made public the marginal notes he added to the despatches of his Ambassadors, show his impatience and bad temper; the books

of Dr. Von Bethmann-Hollweg, General Ludendorff, General Falkenhayn, and Admiral Tirpitz have described the State machinery—its absurdities as well as its efficiency—of which he was the supreme director, and foreign statesmen who came in touch with him have given their estimate of his character. To Count Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, for instance, he was a man who never had a chance, who was flattered and deluded by courtiers, and who consequently became in the end not only incapable of seeing but also determined never to hear the truth. To Take Jonescu, the Roumanian statesman, the Kaiser was essentially a timorous man, but when he did screw his courage to the sticking place “his impetuosity became insane.”

But it has been left to the ex-Emperor to tell us what is most accurate and illuminating about himself. The correspondence which is contained in this volume consists of seventy-five letters which were written by the Kaiser to the late Emperor Nicholas of Russia and covers a period from the accession of the Tsar down to the year of the Great War. As in all the communications between the two Emperors, the letters were written in English and are in the Kaiser's own handwriting. After the murder of the Tsar at Ekaterinberg in July, 1919, the letters were found among his personal effects in a case containing his private correspondence and were first published in England in the columns of the

Morning Post. Their publication in the *Morning Post* and in other newspapers throughout the world aroused tremendous interest, particularly in Great Britain and Germany, the two countries most closely concerned in the correspondence. Designed only for the personal perusal of the Emperor Nicholas, the letters throw new light on the profound diplomatic changes that led up to the formation of the Triple Entente, and confirm many rumours about the Kaiser's European policy which had hitherto been based on hearsay or surmise. In them he reveals his diplomatic method. Machiavelli has inspired more than one Prussian statesman since the days of Frederick the Great, but the subtle Italian would smile at the caricature of his precepts as carried out by his pupil at Potsdam. For the Kaiser's diplomacy was a mixture of cajolery and brutality, insincere in its professions and therefore liable to be exposed, and clumsy despite its cunning and therefore bound to be checkmated by real diplomatists like Delcassé, Isvolsky, and King Edward VII. One country was to be divided against another—Russia against Japan; Russia against France; above all, Russia against Great Britain. It must always be remembered, too, that this correspondence reveals only one side of the Kaiser's method. If all the secret diplomacy of the last thirty years were told, it would probably be found that while he was intriguing against England in Russia, he was at the same time intriguing against Russia in

England. It was a clever game, but it had this drawback, that it was certain to be found out in time.

With this object in view the Kaiser used all his arts to win over to his purpose the Autocrat of All the Russias. The Emperor Nicholas was a good Christian; Europe was therefore to look to him as the Defender of the Cross against the Yellow Peril. He was to be Admiral of the Pacific just as his "most affectionate friend and Cousin" was to be Admiral of the Atlantic; the maritime ambitions of both could be gratified only at the expense of "the ridiculous British," "the meddlesome Power," and so on. The Tsar was an absolute ruler by Divine Right, but France, the friend of Russia, was a Republic and "Republicans are Revolutionists *de natura*" (letter No. VII). The Tsar was a good family man; the letters never weary in protestations of friendship, in "best love to Alix" (the Empress of Russia); in "most respectful compliments to your dear Mama" (the Dowager Empress Marie Feodorovna) and in pleasant gossip about the Kaiser's own family and the relatives common to both. The Tsar finally was a man of peace; and the dexterous combinations suggested from Potsdam were all destined in the interest of peace! The Kaiser indeed was indefatigable in playing on the prejudices and simplicity of his Russian cousin, and it must be admitted that he to some extent succeeded. That the Tsar's eyes were opened is of course a matter of

history, but at what precise time it would be difficult to say. Probably after the signing of the famous secret Russo-German Treaty by the two Emperors at Bjorke on July 24th, 1905, the Russian Foreign Office succeeded in opening the eyes of its monarch to the dangers he was incurring in listening to the advice contained in the flamboyant and flattering epistles of his Ally. At any rate the tone of the later letters is in marked contrast with the effusive confidence of the earlier ones ; the correspondence, like so many others, is the record of the waning of a friendship.

The first letter opens with the death of the Tsar Alexander III, the father of the Emperor Nicholas, on November 1st, 1894. It will be noticed that the Kaiser has taken to heart the advice of his grandfather the Emperor William I, "Keep on good terms with Russia," given, according to the story, on his deathbed to his grandson, whom he mistook for Bismarck (letter No. I). The Kaiser, however, had his own peculiar ideas as to how that advice was to be followed. In letter No. IV he begins the great game of embroiling Russia with Japan by thanking the Tsar "for the excellent way in which you initiated the combined action of Europe for the sake of its interest against Japan." A conflict between Russia and Japan would play into Germany's hands in many ways, and one of the most striking revelations of the letters is the manner in which the Kaiser egged on the Tsar to more and more

adventures with the object of securing greater and greater benefits for Germany. For one thing it would relieve Russian military pressure on Germany's eastern frontier—a pressure which, it is well known, haunted the Kaiser from the day he ascended the throne, and which, as Ludendorff has shown, was a source of such serious anxiety to the German General Staff in the autumn of 1914. Then Naval commitments in the Far East would correspondingly weaken the Russian naval strength in the Baltic, and, further, a defeat of the Russian Fleet might lead to orders for rebuilding for “our great firms at Stettin, Kiel, etc.” Letter No. XLIII shows that the Kaiser, who was a born commercial traveller, was not above touting for such orders. There is something particularly malign in the eagerness with which the Kaiser impressed upon the Tsar the necessity for sending out to the Far East both the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets, for he must have known that they were going to their doom.

Then from a weakened Russia economic concessions could be wrested, and in the whole correspondence surely there is no more characteristic and more appalling letter than No. XXXIII. Admiral Togo defeated the Russian Fleet outside Port Arthur on February 8th, and in this letter, dated March 28th of the same year, the Kaiser practically blackmails the Tsar, demanding the speedy conclusion of the famous Treaty of Commerce which placed Russia economically at the

mercy of Germany and which lapsed only on the eve of the Great War. "What a lark it would be," the Kaiser writes, "if you suddenly were to thump your Imperial fist on the 'table of green cloth' and give the lazy ones a jump! After all, one cannot wait for ever, considering the many months that have already been wasted. A promise of a nice picnic in Siberia will, I am sure, do wonders." It is not surprising that there was hesitancy on the Russian side, for it meant that Russian grain was to be milled not in Russian, but in German mills; Russian timber to be sawn, not in Russian, but in German saw-mills; Russian hides to be tanned in Germany, while, with the aid of customs, tariffs, and differential railway rates, the vast output of the industrious Teuton was to pour into Russia.

But above all Russia was the ally of France, and with a Russia weakened by a costly and probably unsuccessful war it might be possible to break up that alliance and dissolve the German nightmare of a war on two fronts. How the Kaiser succeeded beyond his wildest dreams, so far as his own personal efforts were concerned, is now a matter of history. On July 24th, 1905, the two Emperors signed at Bjorke the famous secret Russo-German Treaty which was designed ultimately to break up the Franco-Russian alliance and confront Great Britain with the Continental Combination, Russia, Germany, France, and behind them the other two members of the Triple Alliance, Austria-Hungary and

Italy. A considerable amount of information has already been published concerning this amazing Treaty, notably the series of telegrams in English exchanged between the Kaiser and the Tsar in 1904 and published by the *New York Herald* (Paris edition) in September, 1917. Dr. Dillon's book, "The Eclipse of Russia," also gives interesting information supplied to him by Count Witte. The letters throw additional information on the negotiations which preceded the signing. Two drafts are contained in the correspondence, and the design of the Treaty—the isolation of Great Britain—is much more apparent in the drafts than in its final form and was modified, at the Kaiser's wish, in order not to reveal too clearly his intention.

From the first the Kaiser meant the Treaty to be kept secret from France until it was a *fait accompli*, and the dramatic character of the move can be gauged from the fact that letter No. XL, in which he outlines the plot for "attracting" France into the new combination, is dated November 17th, 1904, five days after the Franco-British *rapprochement* received the approval of the French Chamber. Notwithstanding his spectacular success at Bjorke in the following year, it became clear that with the conclusion of the *Entente Cordiale* the Kaiser was diplomatically checkmated, and it is one of the ironies of the correspondence that Count Isvolsky, of whom the Kaiser had such high expectations, was to become one of the main instruments in transforming the

friendship of two into the partnership of three. As the Triple Entente gradually came into being, the letters become less confident, and more complaining. In letter No. LX, for instance, dated January 8th, 1909, the Kaiser cannot conceal the failure of his designs and his uneasiness at the growing friendship of the two Great Powers, Russia and Great Britain. He deplores "the patent fact" that for two years Russia has been drawing away more and more from Germany, and moving towards "a combination of Powers unfriendly to us." As instances he mentions Russian suspicion of German policy in Persia and China, lack of Russian support in the Baghdad Railway scheme, and, above all, Russian co-operation with Great Britain and France "in the present crisis"—the crisis which was precipitated by Count Aehrenthal's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Kaiser's references to that *coup*, it may be added, are particularly interesting, because he disclaims any German knowledge or instigation of Austria's moves, just as the Wilhelmstrasse was later on to advertise its ignorance of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia in 1914. His reference in the same letter to his disgust with the Serbian people as regicides will also be noted with interest, for his perfectly sincere rage at the murder of the Archduke was undoubtedly one of the reasons which drove him precipitately to war.

It is, in fact, clear that by this time the famous Continental combination against England had

gone the way of so many diplomatic ambitions of a similar character, and that the Kaiser was identifying Germany with that Austrian policy of expansion which, as Prince Lichnowsky foresaw, was to precipitate the Great War.

The Kaiser's dislike of England is one of the dominating facts that emerge from the correspondence. His contempt for King Edward, for the London Press, for the British character, his persistent efforts to checkmate British efforts to mediate between Russia and Japan, and to endanger British interests in the Persian Gulf, Egypt, South Africa, and elsewhere, must be read in the light of the fact that the period covered in these letters witnessed the expansion of the German Navy into the second greatest fleet of the world. M. Hanotaux, the French statesman and former Foreign Minister, has stated that the purport of the letters gradually became known and did much to put the Powers on their guard. That the Kaiser hoped to isolate and therefore weaken England is now proved completely. That he deliberately plotted war is another question. Probably King Edward got nearest the truth when he said to Count Frijs, the Danish diplomatist who was charged on behalf of the Danish Government in 1905 to draw the attention of King Edward to the dangers of a European war, "In my opinion you take too gloomy a view of the future. The only causes of conflict which have arisen (Fashoda and the Morocco question) have been happily settled, a fact which shows a

distinct will-to-peace tendency in Europe; but I will admit this, that with a man of so impulsive a temperament as the German Emperor at the head of the greatest military Power in Europe, anything may happen."

Such, very briefly, is the statecraft of Potsdam as revealed in the correspondence. What about the personality of the writer? The ex-German Emperor was a sincere patriot; the glory and advancement of Germany were the mainspring of all his actions. Like many other rulers who have brought untold misery to mankind, he was a good family man, a devoted husband and father. He did not lack what Mr. Shaw would call "the seven deadly virtues." He had vitality and energy, and he writes extraordinarily well on a great variety of subjects. He had personality, capacity, devotion, and an intense interest in men and affairs. But when all that is admitted, the main trait revealed in this correspondence is surely the Emperor's vulgarity. He had none of the Shakespearean qualities of a King. He belittles himself by vilifying the French, he blackmails the Tsar in a critical moment of Russia's fortunes, he is not above touting for orders, he slings mud at King Edward, even in mentioning his mother's death he cannot forbear a reference to the speed of his warships; his remedy for the griefs and internal troubles of Russia is a Reinhardt spectacle, and his remarks about the British Navy are dangerously near the remarks of a cad. The most amusing passages

of the letters—like the problem of his brother's precedence in letter No. IX, the often deferred journey of Prince Leopold to the Russian front (letters Nos. XXXII, XLVI), the natural reluctance of his aides-de-camp to stay in Petrograd and the excuses they gave for a change (letters Nos. LXV, LXVI, LXIX, and LXXV)—are not of course meant to be amusing. When he tries to be funny, he is always clumsy and often coarse. One can understand why he was so unpopular among the people who really knew him. Englishmen, from the days of Shakespeare downwards, have often been moved at the fall of majesty, at the "miserable change" that comes at the end of greatness, but they can feel but little pity for the man whose schemes for world-wide dominion have ended amid the mists and floods of Amerongen.

The main credit for the notes which accompany the letters is due to my friends Mr. H. Warner Allen, C.B.E., Mr. David Meldrum, and Mr. T. Greig, of the Editorial Staff of the *Morning Post*, and I wish also to express my indebtedness to the proprietors of the *Morning Post* for their permission to make use of the material collected in connection with the publication of the letters in that journal.

WIMBLEDON,
1920.

CHAPTER I
THE FIRST MOVE

The first batch of letters opens with the death of the Tsar Alexander III, father of the Emperor Nicholas, on November 1st, 1894. The Kaiser had seen the Tsarevitch, as he then was, during his visit to Berlin in the January of the preceding year, and also in Coburg in April, 1894. In these early letters the game is to embroil Russia with Japan, and in letter No. IV. the writer is already busy egging on the Tsar, as a Christian and a European, to begin the attack.

I.

Neues Palais, 8/XI, 94.

My dear Nicky,

The heavy and responsible task for which Providence had destined you has come upon you with the suddenness of a surprise, through the so unexpected and untimely death of your dear lamented father.¹ These lines are to express my

¹ Alexander III died at Livadia, November 1st, 1894.

The death of the Tsar Alexander III caused considerable uneasiness throughout Europe. The new Russian Emperor

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fullest and warmest sympathy with you and your Alix¹ and your poor distressed mother.² I can well understand the feelings which must have agitated your heart in witnessing the ebbing away of the life of your father, as his illness and sudden passing away were so very like my own dear Papa's,³ with whose character and kind geniality the late Tsar had so many likenesses. My prayers to God for you and your happiness are unceasing. May Heaven comfort you in your grief and give you strength for your heavy duties, and may a long and peaceful reign give you the opportunity of looking after the welfare of your subjects.

The sympathy and real grief at the so untimely end of your lamented father in my country will have shown you how strong the monarchical

was an unknown quantity, or, as a German paper expressed it, "a page with no writing on it." The Kaiser believed that he had taken the Tsar's measure, and as soon as he received the news of Alexander's death he took the opportunity of a military banquet at Stettin to drink to the new Tsar's health and to offer him his friendship. This precipitate action, so typical of the Kaiser, was regarded at the time, particularly in France, as a clever stroke of diplomacy, since Germany was the first to come forward to welcome the new Emperor.

¹ Princess Alix of Hesse, to whom the Tsar was betrothed. They were married a fortnight after the date of this letter, on November 26th, 1894.

² The Dowager Empress Marie Feodorovna (the Princess Dagmar of Denmark).

³ Emperor Frederick.

instinct is and how Germany feels for you and your subjects. As formerly, you will always find me the same in undiminished friendship and love to you. What our political ideals are we both know perfectly, and I have nothing to add to our last conversation in Berlin.¹ I only can repeat the expression of absolute trust in you and the assurance that I shall always cultivate the old relations of mutual friendship with your House, in which I was reared by my Grandfather,² and some examples of which I was so glad to be able to give to your dear Papa in those last six months of his reign, and which I am happy to hear were fully appreciated by him. I would have come myself to pray with you at the funeral,³ but I have so much to do with administration at home that it is impossible.

Henry will be the bearer of my messages, Gen. v. Plessen/ commandant of my Headquarters,⁴ Lieut.-Col. v. Moltke⁵ my Aide de Camp, and Gen. v. Villaun,⁶ your old friend, will accompany him on board his ship to Cronstadt. At the same time by land Col. v. Saussin, of the Kaiser

¹ January 28th, 1893.

² William I, first German Emperor.

³ November 19th, 1894. Prince Henry of Prussia represented the Kaiser.

⁴ Appointed Commandant of the Kaiser's headquarters in 1892.

⁵ Nephew of the great Moltke ; appointed Aide-de-Camp to the Kaiser in 1891 ; Chief of the German General Staff from 1906 to December, 1914.

⁶ Probably General Carl von Villaun.

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Alexander Garde Grend. Reg. I., will report himself to you as the new Chef of the Regiment. Whereas to your Regiment¹ of Hussars I have given your Name, of which they will be immensely proud. In the first named Guard Regiment the person of the late Tsar was always highly venerated, and last Monday² the whole corps of its officers and the four Colours of the Regiment joined their prayers with mine at the chapel of the Russian Embassy at Berlin.

Now, dearest Nicky, Good bye, God bless and protect you and dear Alix, and give you happiness in your new married life, that is the warm wish of

Your most aff-ate and devoted
friend and cousin,
WILLIAM.

II.

Potsdam, 5/I, 95.

My Dear Nicky,

Your kind letter which Knorring brought to me involved very interesting but very sad news. I

¹ The 8th Hussars.

² At the Memorial Service held in the Russian Embassy Chapel in Berlin, "there were present the officers of the Emperor Alexander Regiment, which furnished the Guard of Honour, with a band and four colours draped with crape, the men wearing the historical Grenadier head-dress" (*Morning Post*, November 6th, 1894).

am very thankful for your explanation and fully understand the motives which prompt you to decide about Count Schouvaloff.¹ In the same time I can assure you that I am deeply grieved at losing excellent Paul, who was the *only* ambassador at Berlin with whom I was on really intimate terms and who was an "*ami intime*" to me as far as a non-German could claim such name. I will miss him very much indeed. He fully deserves the eulogies you gave him in your Rescript and the near and intimate relations of our Courts and People could not have been better looked after than by him.

I hope and trust that the person whom you are going to select to replace him will be able to carry on the work in the same manner and with the same truthfulness and openness of character like Schouvaloff; as the relations of our two countries rest on traditional bases, quite other than those with other nations, and are of commanding influence on the whole of the world. At your dear Father's express wish I replaced

¹ One of the greatest figures in Russian diplomacy of the past generation. His influence largely prevented a second Franco-Prussian war. At the time of the Berlin Conference, 1878, he was Russian Ambassador in London. On January 3rd, 1895, the Tsar issued a Rescript congratulating in the warmest terms Count Shuvaloff on nine years' brilliant diplomacy as Russian Ambassador in Berlin, and appointed him Governor-General of Warsaw. At a farewell banquet the Kaiser presented Count Shuvaloff with a gold cigar case "not as an Emperor but as a friend."

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Schweinitz¹ by Werder, if I could at the same time express a wish, it would be that you chose either Pahlen,² Richter,³ or Staal⁴ as *remplaçants* if possible.⁵

Now let me wish you a Happy new Year at the side of that dear Angel Alix, and may it be a year of peace and prosperity! My Xmas gift will I hope amuse you, it is an album with photos from the *Fahnenweihe* (Dedication of the Flags) at Berlin.

Hoping that we shall be able to meet each other somewhere this year.

I remain,
Your most aff-ate friend,
WILLY.

¹ General von Schweinitz was German Ambassador in Petrograd until 1892, when, after Bismarck's fall, he was replaced by General von Werder, who had been German Military Plenipotentiary attached to the Tsar's person. In 1876 Bismarck had demanded Werder's recall because important diplomatic negotiations were passing through him instead of Schweinitz, the accredited Ambassador.

² Count von der Pahlen, a high dignitary of the Russian Court who in 1896 was personally entrusted by the Tsar with the duty of conducting a special investigation of the Moscow coronation disaster.

³ General, Chief of Emperor's Military Household, who was for many years the backbone of the Russian pro-German party.

⁴ Georges de Staal, Russian Ambassador in London from 1884 to 1903.

⁵ The Kaiser's suggestions were ignored by the Tsar, and Count Osten-Sacken succeeded Count Shuvaloff.

III.

Berlin, 7/II, 95.

Dearest Nicky,

Egloffstein¹ will I hope be able to bring over the whole heap of porcelain without any breakage. He is instructed to arrange the table so as it would be, if you gave a dinner for 50 ; so that you should have the *coup d'œil* of the whole affair. I hope that my manufacturer has done everything to fulfil your wishes and that the present may be useful to you both.

Since the sad weeks you had to go through have passed much has happened in Europe. You have lost an excellent old servant of your predecessors, old Giers,² who was a very good fellow whom I much esteemed. France³ has changed *par surprise* her head and government and through the amnesty opened the doors to all the worst

¹ The Court Marshal who had apparently been entrusted with the duty of conveying the Kaiser's wedding present to the Tsar.

² Nicolas de Giers had been Russian Secretary for Foreign Affairs since 1882. He once remarked: "I am nothing and nobody. I am simply the pen and mouthpiece of my Imperial master." Behind this mask of absolute subservience to the Emperor M. de Giers was one of the cleverest of Russian diplomats.

³ M. Casimir-Périer, President of the French Republic, resigned on January 15th, 1895, the day after the Dupuy Cabinet was overthrown by the Chamber. In this confused political situation M. Félix Faure was elected President of the Republic on January 17th, and on January 26th M. Ribot formed a Cabinet which introduced and carried a Bill giving amnesty to political offenders.

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malefactors the former people with difficulty had managed to imprison. The impulse given to the Democrats and the Revolutionary party is also to be felt here. My Reichstag¹ behaves as badly as it can, swinging backwards and forwards between the socialists egged on by the Jews, and the ultramontane Catholics; both parties being soon fit to be hung all of them as far as I can see.

In England² the ministry is toddling on to its fall amidst universal derision! In short everywhere the "*principe de la Monarchie*" is called upon to show itself strong. That is why I am so glad at the capital speech³ you made the other day to the deputations in response to some addresses for Reform! It was very much to the point and made a deep impression everywhere.

¹ On December 6th of the preceding year, at the first sitting in the new Reichstag building, six Socialists refused to rise when the President called for three cheers for the Kaiser. The Socialist Party was bitterly opposed to the Anti-Revolutionary Bill, while the Catholics refused to support it without concessions from the Government. In the words of a contemporary observer, "the characteristic of the present situation in Germany is that extreme movements in every field are usurping the place of older political organisations."

² The Rosebery Government fell on June 21st, 1895.

³ On January 29th the Tsar, in reply to deputations from all the Zemstvos and Municipalities, spoke of reforms demanded in very uncouth language by the Zemstvo of Tver as "unrealisable imaginings," a phrase that created great sensation at the moment. His speech concluded with words well calculated to please the Kaiser, "I shall uphold the principle of autocracy as firmly and unflinchingly as did my ever lamented Father."

For the opening of our Canal¹ in the end of June I have invited all European Governments to send warships to Kiel. I hope your fleet will also be represented by a ship or two ?

With my respects to your Mamy and many compliments to Alix, I remain

Your most aff^{ate} friend,

WILLY.

IV. Kaltenbronn, Schwarzwald, 26/IV, 95.²

Dearest Nicky,

As Prince Radolin³ leaves shortly for Petersburg I send these few lines by him. He is an excellent and warm friend of mine, who has been proved by the difficult task he had when being Papa's Chief of the Household during his short reign. He stubbornly resisted any trials of intrigue from any side. You may place *full and implicit* confidence in him, his discreetness is proverbial, and he is burning to do everything in his power to please us both and to tighten the traditional ties which unite our families and countries since

¹ Kiel Canal—opened June 21st, 1895.

² Shooting box in Black Forest near Wildbad.

³ Ambassador in Constantinople 1892 to 1895 ; in Petrograd 1895 to 1901 ; in Paris 1901 to 1910. Hofmarschall of the Emperor Frederick. Succeeded General von Werder at Petrograd.

nearly a century. He hates the Poles and has no more to do with them or interest in them than with the Sandwich Islanders.

I thank you sincerely for the excellent way in which you initiated the combined action of Europe¹ for the sake of its interests against Japan. It was high time that energetic steps were taken and will make an excellent impression in Japan as elsewhere. It shows to evidence how necessary it is that we should hold together, and also that there is existant a base of common interests upon which *all* European nations may work in *joint action* for the welfare of all, as is shown by the adherence of France to us two. May the conviction that this can be done without touching a nation's honour take root more and more firmly, then no doubt the fear of war in Europe will dissipate more and more. The kind and most valuable messages which you sent me through Osten Sacken² by Count Eulenburg's transmission in Vienna have given me a signal proof of your loyalty and openness towards me. I shall certainly do all in my power to keep Europe quiet, and also guard the rear of Russia so that nobody shall hamper your action towards the Far East!

¹ The protest of Russia, France, and Germany against the Chino-Japanese Treaty of Shimonoseki (April 17th), made on April 24th, forced Japan to give up the Liao-tung peninsula and Port Arthur.

² Count Nicolas. Succeeded Shuvaloff as Russian Ambassador in Berlin.

For that is clearly the great task of the future for Russia to cultivate the Asian Continent and to defend Europe from the inroads of the Great Yellow race. In this you will always find me on your side, ready to help you as best I can. You have well understood that call of Providence and have quickly grasped the moment; it is of immense political and historical value and much good will come of it. I shall with interest await the further development of our action and hope that, just as I will gladly help you to settle the question of eventual annexations¹ of portions of territory for Russia, you will kindly see that Germany may also be able to acquire a Port somewhere were it does not *gêne* you.

I am afraid that, as the Norwegians² are in a state bordering on insanity, I may not be able to make my summer tour there, but shall have to cruise about on the Swedish coast of the Baltic. Should that be the case could not we have a meeting somewhere for our two yachts where it suits you and have a quiet little chat between ourselves? It would be so nice.

Now good bye dearest Nicky, give my best love

¹ These annexations eventually resulted in Germany taking Kiao-Chau, Russia Port Arthur, and England Wei-hai-wei in 1898.

² Norway was passing through a crisis due to the demand for greater political independence. Ten years later the separation of Norway and Sweden took place.

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to Alix and respectful compliments to your
Mama, from Ever your most

devoted and aff^{ate} friend,

WILLY.

P.S. Radolin is quite *eingeweih*t (initiated)
in all my ideas I just developed to you.

V.

Stora SUNDBY 10/VII 95.

Dearest Nicky,

My journey in Sweden and along its shores
bring me opposite to your shores and to your
buen retiro, and I cannot let this moment pass,
when I am only a short cruise away from you,
without sending you a line, as I shall not un-
happily be able to meet you on the salty brine.

Let me once more thank you with all my
heart for the sending of those splendid ships of
yours,¹ which so ably and powerfully represented
the Russian Navy at Kiel. Alexei² was kindness
and jovialty itself and did everything in his
power to make intercourse with our russian
comrades everything that could be wished for.
Your kind permission to place him *à la suite* of
our navy made my officers very proud and seemed
to have given him pleasure. I had the oppor-

¹ The *Imperator Alexander II.* and the *Rurik*.

² The Grand Duke Alexis, uncle of the Tsar, and for many
years Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Navy.

tunity of some serious talk about Eastern Asian Affairs with Alexi, and also his good old Baron Schilling, who was a very great friend of my Grandfather's. He will, I suppose, already have reported to you about it.

I was glad to be able to show, how our interests were entwined in the Far East, that my ships had been ordered to second yours in case of need when things looked doubtful, that Europe had to be thankful to you that you so quickly had perceived the great future for Russia in the cultivation of Asia and in the Defence of the Cross and the old Christian European culture against the inroads of the Mongols and Buddhism, that it was natural that if Russia was engaged in this tremendous work you wished to have Europe quiet and your back free; and that it was natural and without doubt that this would be my task and that I would let nobody try to interfere with you and attack from behind in Europe during the time you were fulfilling the great mission which Heaven has shaped for you. That was as sure as Amen in Church.

One incident took place of which I think I ought to tell you as I am quite certain that it happened without Alexei's knowledge, but having become known among our officers created a very painful impression. On board the *Grossi-aschtschy*—the vessel which I invited Admiral Skrydlow¹ and his Captains to pass the Canal

¹ Commander of the Russian Squadron at Kiel. Eventually became Chief of the Russian Admiralty.

with—two Engineer Officers were secretly embarked which had not been announced to our Authorities. The Eldest was Col. Bubnow. These in conjunction with a lieutenant who is specially trained for the purpose and who had a large apparatus took photographs of our Forts and batteries, made notes and sketches all along the road and finally—when Skrydlow saw that my Naval Attaché was rather astonished to see quite strange people on the ship—were introduced to him as two directors of waterworks and waterways! At Kiel Bubnow's bearing became so *suspecte* that Police and Gendarmes followed him. He went about in plain clothes and was prowling about the fortifications, which was strictly forbidden to strangers! Now I think this is not quite fair, if you are invited as guest at such a fete in a foreign country, which without reserve throws open its gates to you and lets you into its War harbour, to abuse hospitality in this manner, to try to spy out your friend and that even under assumed character! The consequence is that this will make people very careful with Russian warships and create uneasy feelings, which I so deplore and hope to overcome.¹

Pray excuse my mentioning this matter, but I thought it better to tell you directly instead of making diplomatic notes, etc., as you know how

¹ The Kaiser's protest is perhaps not unconnected with the fact that the French and Russian Fleets sailed into Kiel together, and that throughout the festivities a point was made of displaying the friendship of France and Russia.

I feel for you and Russia. But I do wish to have every difficulty which could arise in the work of drawing our countries closer together removed before it strikes root.

Goodbye dearest Nicky, my best love to Alix and to you, with wishes for a quiet summer and a nice little boy to come, believe me, dear Nicky,

Ever your most affectionate

friend and cousin,

WILLY.

CHAPTER II

THE JAMESON RAID

Taking as a text some suggested reforms in the French Army organisation, Willy soundly lectures Nicky on the danger of his association with the French—"those damned rascals" as he calls them—and there is, in that connection, a theatrical appeal to the monarchical instincts of the Emperor Nicholas.

A most interesting letter from the English point of view is No. VIII., which deals with the Jameson Raid. This letter was written apparently on the same day as the Kaiser's famous telegram to President Kruger congratulating him on the defeat of the Raid. It seems probable that the Kaiser was uneasy as to the possible consequences of his indiscretion and lost no time in sounding the Tsar.

The Kaiser in this letter states that as a result of the Raid he has "opened communications with Paris for common defence of our endangered interests." There is reason to believe, however, that it was not directly with Paris that he communicated, but with the French Ambassador in Berlin, then M. Herbette, through Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, then German Foreign Secretary.

The Ambassador, in reply, asked what Germany was prepared to do about Egypt, which at the time

was a source of contention between England and France. The Baron was unable to make any offer, and the whole matter then apparently dropped.

It is apparent, too, from the references to the Dardanelles and the Armenian question in letter No. VII., that Lord Salisbury's foreign policy was getting on the Kaiser's nerves.

VI.

Jagdhaus Rominten,¹ 26/IX, 95

Dearest Nicky,

My Uncle the Chancellor² referring to the kind and sympathetic way with which you received him, has owned himself quite won by your manner, and was profoundly impressed by your knowledge about the political situation and the quiet and calm manner with which you judged the questions of interest. He also told me that you expressed a wish that I should continue the custom, which we have begun, of writing to you

¹ In East Prussia, near the Russian frontier, where the Kaiser had had a shooting box.

This letter was personally conveyed to the Tsar by von Moltke, who had just been promoted Colonel, and who presented it to him on September 30th, 1895. His audience with the Tsar attracted considerable attention at the time. It was believed that the letter was accompanied by a portrait of the Kaiser, but it would appear from the above text that the Kaiser had sent not a portrait of himself, but his famous engraving of the Yellow Peril.

² Prince von Hohenlohe, who succeeded Caprivi October 29th, 1894. He had arrived in Petrograd on September 10th.

if I thought there was occasion for it. I do this with pleasure.

The situation in the Far East has given you the opportunity of discussing it with my uncle, I thank you for the way in which you kindly alluded to my co-operation with Russia in the coaling station question.¹ The development of the Far East, especially its danger to Europe and our Christian Faith is a matter which has been greatly on my mind ever since we made our first move together in Spring. At last my thoughts developed into a certain form and this I sketched on paper. I worked it out with an artist²—a first class draughtsman—and after it was finished had it engraved for public use.

¹ Probably refers to arrangements in the Far East.

² The Yellow Peril cartoon stated by the *North German Gazette* to have been specially designed by the Kaiser for presentation to the Tsar. The same paper describes the engraving which was carried out by Professor Knackfuss, of Cassel, as follows: "On a plateau of rock bathed in light radiating from the Cross . . . stand allegorical figures of the civilised nations. In the foreground is France shading her eyes with her left hand. She cannot altogether believe in the proximity of danger, but Germany, armed with shield and sword, follows with attentive eye the approach of calamity. Russia, a beautiful woman with a wealth of hair, leans her arm as if in close friendship on the shoulder of her martial companion. Beside this group Austria stands in resolute pose. She extends her right hand in an attitude of invitation as if to win the co-operation of still somewhat reluctant England in the common task. . . . In front of this martial group of many figures stands unmailed the winged Archangel Michael, holding in his right hand a flaming sword. . . . At the foot of the rocky plateau stands the vast plain of civilised

It shows the powers of Europe represented by their respective Genii called together by the Arch-Angel-Michael,—sent from Heaven,—to *unite* in resisting the inroad of Buddhism, heathenism and barbarism for the Defence of the Cross. Stress is especially laid on the *united* resistance of *all* European Powers, which is just as necessary also against our common internal foes, anarchism, republicanism, nihilism. I venture to send you an engraving begging you to accept it as a token of my warm and sincere friendship to you and Russia.

In the midst of these peaceful occupations and of the quiet hunting, fell the astounding news I got from Paris that the French Chamber's Budget Committee,¹ in discussing the Military Budget, Europe. . . . In the foreground is the Castle of Hohenzollern, but over these peaceful landscapes clouds of calamity are rolling up. . . . The path trodden by Asiatic hordes in their onward career is marked by a sea of flame proceeding from a burning city. Dense clouds of smoke twisting into the form of hellish distorted faces ascend from the conflagration. The threatening danger in the form of Buddha is enthroned in this sombre framework. A Chinese dragon, which at the same time represents the demon of destruction, carries this heathen idol. In an awful onset the Powers of Darkness draw nearer to the banks of the protecting stream. Only a little while and that stream is no longer a barrier." (Berlin Correspondent, *Morning Post*, November 11th, 1895.)

¹ It was at this time considering the formation of a Colonial army and the plan before it involved not the removal of the XIXth Corps to France as the Kaiser asserts, but its suppression or reduction. In later years Germany was to learn to its cost that the French Colonial Army, formed of regular soldiers, was a terrible enemy, but the Kaiser deliberately exaggerates and misrepresents the danger of the proposed French Army changes.

propose to recall the XIX Corps/Algier and Tunis/and to form a *new* continental Corps on *my Western Frontier*. This recall has only been done once before in 1870, when France made war on us. Such a project, in the deepest times of Peace, has fallen like a thunderbolt on Germany and has created a deep feeling of alarm. This has been deepened by the fact that the proposal became publicly known the Moment after Prince Lobanoff¹ and General Dragomiroff had officially assisted the Review of the French "Border Army" on the Lorraine Frontier amidst the frenetic enthusiasm of the "Border People."

This Army which the French papers are telling us since weeks is meant for the first rush on our "Border Land" in the Revanche war! It is already 4 Corps strong against my 2/XV.XVI./The proposed new Corps would increase the already overwhelming French forces to 5 Corps, and constitutes a threat as well as a serious danger to my country. Of course upon this I must now begin to take matters seriously. For this event happening in the moment your officers are being decorated and Lobanoff feted, whilst my attaché's ears were greeted with not over agreeable remarks, has made people uneasy here and given affairs an ugly look, as if Russia would like France to be offensive against Germany with the hopes of help

¹ Minister of Foreign Affairs. He and General Dragomiroff, who had been specially sent by the Tsar as his representative, were present at the manœuvres in the neighbourhood of Mirecourt at the end of September, 1895.

from the first named. Such a serious danger will cause me to strongly increase my army, to be able to cope with such fearful odds. Heavy as the financial strain would weigh on us, my People would never waver a moment to guarantee their security should this be necessary.

I perfectly know that *you* personally do not dream of attacking us, but still you cannot be astonished that the European Powers get alarmed seeing how the presence of your officers and high officials in *official way* in France fans the inflammable Frenchman into a white heated passion and strengthens the cause of Chauvinism and Revanche!

God knows that I have done all in my power to preserve the European Peace, but if France goes on openly or secretly encouraged like this to violate all rules of international courtesy and Peace in peace times, one fine day my dearest Nicky you will find yourself *nolens volens* suddenly embroiled in the most horrible of wars Europe ever saw! Which will by the masses and by history perhaps be fixed on you as the cause of it. Pray dont be angry, if I perhaps hurt you quite unintentionally, but I think it my duty to our two countries and to you as my friend to write openly, as the seclusion and retirement the deep mourning has imposed upon you debars you from seeing people and following in detail what is happening—*behind the scenes*.

I have some experience of Politics, and see certain unmistakable symptoms, so I hasten to

you, my friend, to plead in the name of the Peace of Europe ; if you are allied for better, for worse with the French, well then, keep those damned rascals in order and make them sit still, if not, then dont let your Men who go to France make the French believe that you are allied and get reckless and turn their heads till they loose them, and we have to fight in Europe instead for it against the East ! Think of the awful responsibility for the shocking bloodshed ! Now Goodbye dearest Nicky, best love to dear Alex, and believe me Ever your most devoted friend and faithful friend and Cousin

WILLY,
I.R.¹

VII.

Neues Palais Potsdam 25/X 95.

Dearest Nicky,

Uncle Micha's² most joyful and unexpected arrival who just lunched with us gives me an agreeable opportunity to warmly thank you for your kind letter Moltke brought home. He is still quite full of all your kindness and quite enraptured by your whole person and your ways. Your ideas about the press in general are exactly the same as mine. It has done and still

¹ Emperor Rex. A reminder to Nicky that his correspondent speaks as one having authority.

² The Grand Duke Michael.

continues to do a deal of harm and we must bear with a great amount of spite, lying and nonsense. Still the influence it *horribile dictu* has, must be judged from the spirit of the People of the different races who are brought up to read it.

Your subjects and mine are slower at thought, sober and quieter in their conclusions they draw, as for instance Southerners or the French. The Roman and Gallic races are more easily roused, incensed and more ready to jump to conclusions, and once having flared up are more dangerous to peace than the Teutonic or Russian Race. Again in England the Press is more the mouth-piece of Public opinion than on the Continent and goes in more for the interests of its Country !

Lobanow's visit¹ was most interesting to me, he is no doubt a very able Diplomatist and a splendid causeur. And what he told me was *sehr beruhigend* (very reassuring) about France. I thought it right to talk quite openly about France with him as he told me you had communicated with him. In one respect I took pains to show him that I did not wish to be misunderstood. That it is not a *fact* of the *Rapport* or friendship between Russia and France that makes one uneasy. Every Sovereign is sole master of his country's interests and he shapes his policy accordingly—but the danger which is brought to our Principle of Monarchism through the lifting

¹ Lobanow, after his visit to France, went through Germany and met the Kaiser at Hubertusstock on October 13th, 1895.

up the Republic on a pedestal by the form under which the friendship is shown. The constant appearance of Princes, Grand-dukes, statesmen, Generals in "full fig" at reviews, burials, dinners, races, with the head of the Republic or in his entourage makes Republicains—as such—believe that they are quite honest excellent people, with whom Princes can consort and feel at home!

Now what is the consequence at home in our different countries? The Republicans are Revolutionists *de natura* and where treated—rightly too—as people who must be shot or hung, they tell our other loyal subjects: "Oh we are no dangerous bad men, look at France! There you see the Royalties hobnobbing with the *Revolutionaires*! Why should not it be the same with us?" The R.F.¹ is from the source of the Great Revolution and propagates, and is bound to do so, the ideas of it. Don't forget that Jaurès²—not his personal fault—sits on the throne of the King and Queen of France "by the Grace of God" whose heads Frenchmen Republicans cut off! The Blood of their Majesties is still on that country! Look at it, has it since then ever been

¹ République Française.

² The famous Socialist Deputy who the day before this letter was written had introduced the interpellation on the Carmaux strike in the French Chamber. In his speech, which the Kaiser may well have read, he said: "In the present organisation of Society the exaggerated vanity of a single man is sufficient to condemn a thousand families to misery."

happy or quiet again? Has it not staggered from bloodshed to bloodshed? And in its great moments did it not go from war to war? till it soused all Europe and Russia in streams of blood? Till at last it had the Commune over again? Nicky take my word on it the curse of God has stricken that People forever!

We Christian Kings and Emperors have one holy duty imposed on us by Heaven, that is to uphold the Principle von Gottes Gnaden (by the Grace of God) we can have good relations with the R.F. but never be *intime* with her! I always fear that in frequent and long visits in France people without feeling it imbibe Republican ideas. Here I must tell you an example! I remember a few years ago a gentleman—no German—telling me full of horror that when he was at a fashionable *salon* in Paris he heard a Russian General answer a French one's question whether Russia would smash the German Army, answer "Oh, nous serons battus à plate couture, mais qu'est-ce que ça fait? Nous aurons alors aussi la République!" That is what I am afraid of for you my dear Nicky! Dont forget Skobelew¹ and his plan for carrying off the Imp.-family at a dinner once. Therefor take care that your Generals don't like

¹ The famous Russian General. According to a report current just before his sudden death in 1882 Skobeleff, who was ill pleased with the course of politics in Russia, was the author of a plot to surround the Winter Palace, arrest the Tsar, and proclaim a constitution.

the R.F. too much. Please forgive my being so open but I want you to see how warmly I feel for you and how anxious I am about you, and that you should fully know what my motives are.

The next point of interest was the news Lobanow told me about Turkey; that he had cause to suspect England was after the Dardanelles! And therefor had revived the Armenian question.¹ I confess that I was utterly stupefied at this piece of news. No doubt since Salisbury's *avenement* England's foreign policy has become most mysterious and unintelligible, and the quaint way in which the Fleet sulks around the Dardanelles indicates that it means something there. But if they do that they violate the Treaty of Berlin and this they cannot be allowed to do without the permission of all the other signatory Powers; which they never will do. But it seems that they have some Idea or other of changing their Policy in the Mediterranean, for two days ago Malet² on paying his farewell visit to our Foreign Office used very blustering words, about Germany behaving badly to England

¹ In this year Armenian massacres were in full swing, and Great Britain under Lord Salisbury's administration was pressing reforms on the Porte.

² Sir Edward Malet, British Ambassador at Berlin, had a special audience with the Kaiser on October 21st in order to present his letters of recall after eleven years in Berlin. Contemporary accounts lay emphasis on the courtesy with which the Kaiser received the British Ambassador on this occasion.

in Africa,¹ that it would not stand it any longer and that after bying off the French by concessions in Egypt² they were at liberty to look after us. He even was so undiplomatic to utter the word "war!" Saying that even England would not shrink from making war upon me if we did not knock down in Africa.

I have made an answer to the effect that the British were making themselves ridiculous in this case, but obnoxious to everybody, and if they got into trouble with anybody else I would not move a Pomeranian Grenadier³ to help them. I suppose that will cool them. It is the same thing I told Lobanow. I told him besides that if Russia should be seriously engaged in the Far East, I looked upon it as my duty to keep your back free from anybody in Europe and to see that all be kept quiet, and that nothing would happen from me also to France, provided I was

¹ At this time it was believed that German agents were trying to obtain a footing in Matabeleland, which was one of the objectives of Cecil Rhodes' policy. It was, moreover, a perpetual source of friction that Germany persisted in maintaining direct relations with the Transvaal, although the Convention of 1884 laid it down that any agreements concluded by the Transvaal with foreign Governments must be approved by the British Government.

² No concessions had actually been made, though there is reason to believe that the British Government was anxious to enter into friendly relations with France.

³ The Kaiser seems to be referring to Bismarck's famous declaration that the Eastern Question, so far as Germany was concerned, was not worth "the sound bones of a single Pomeranian Grenadier."

not attacked. He warmly thanked me for this. I share his fear that Japan has some sort of understanding with England and that is why it is so stiffbacked.

Before concluding let me express my most heartfelt sympathy, for the 1 of November¹ is now approaching. God alone can soothen the pangs of sorrow that will rend your heart on mourning such a kind father and such an excellent and good man, so like my poor Papa! May I propose something to you which I have at heart? Considering our near relations and the constant exchange of letters and messages, which would unnecessarily always put the Embassy machines in motion, would you not like to renew the old custom our Forefathers had for nearly a century, and have again a personal aide-de-camp attached to our respective staffs? The more Private and *intime* affairs could as in olden times go directly by them, which makes matters much simpler? I shall take with pleasure anybody whom you really trust into my *Maison militaire*, would you like Moltke? Now I shan't trouble you any longer! Goodbye dearest Nicky, my best love to Alix and the "future," and believe me always

Your most devoted and affate

friend and cousin

WILLY.

¹ Anniversary of the death of Tsar Alexander III.

VIII.

Neues Palais, 2/I, 96.

Dearest Nicky,

Radolin's¹ return to Petersburg gives me the opportunity of sending you a few lines. Please let me thank you most sincerely for the signs of kindness and friendship you have given me and my country, which has given a sense of quietness and security, and which I beg you will continue to bestow on us in the following year.

With my warmest congratulations for the New Year and a merry Xmas I join my prayers that the Lord may bless and protect you, dear Alix, your sweet child,² and all your family from all Evil, sorrow or sickness. May your reign be prosperous and may you see the realisation of many a scheme you have elaborated for the welfare of your subjects. May our countries be able as before to join in the strengthening and upholding of Peace and in the defence of their faith and interests against any outward or inward foe.

The political horizon is peculiar just now. Armenia³ and Venezuela⁴ are open questions

¹ German Ambassador in Petrograd.

² Grand Duchess Olga, born November 3rd, 1895.

³ See preceding letter.

⁴ The British Guiana-Venezuela dispute had been dragging on for months, and in October, 1895, Great Britain presented an ultimatum to the Venezuelan Government. Diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Venezuela were suspended in 1887, and were not restored till 1897. The chief

England brought up, and now suddenly the Transvaal Republic¹ has been attacked in a most foul way as it seems not without England's knowledge. I have used very severe language in London, and have opened communications with Paris for common defence of our endangered interests, as French and German colonists have immediately joined hands of their own accord to help the outraged boers. I hope you will also kindly consider the question, as it is one of principle of upholding treaties² once concluded. I hope that all will come right, but come what may, I never shall allow the British to stamp out the Transvaal! I hope you have better news for your poor brother³ who has arrived as I see at the Riviera!

importance of this question arose from the intervention of the United States based on the Monroe Doctrine.

¹ The Jameson Raid began on December 29th, 1895, and ended with the unconditional surrender of the raiders on January 2nd, 1896. On that day the German Emperor wrote this letter to the Tsar, and also sent a telegram to President Kruger in the following terms: "I express my sincere congratulation that, supported by your people and without appealing for the help of friendly Powers, you have succeeded by your own energetic action against armed bands which invaded your country as disturbers of the peace, and have thus been enabled to restore peace and safeguard the independence of the country against attacks from outside.—WILLIAM."

² The Kaiser did not wish Great Britain to regard treaties as "*chiffons de papier*."

³ The Grand Duke George, second son of the Emperor Alexander III, the invalid Tsarevitch, who was suffering from consumption and who died in the Crimea in 1899.

Please give my best love to dear Alix, and
once more thanking you for all kindness to
Stremz and his men, believe me, dear Nicky,

Ever

Your most aff^{ate} cousin and friend,

WILLY.

CHAPTER III

THE TWO SENTINELS

In letter No. IX. there is an amusing reference to a question of precedence.

As to the attack on Bismarck in No. XI. on October 24th, 1896, the Hamburger Nachrichten, in an article inspired by Bismarck, announced that a secret treaty of reinsurance had been drawn up between Russia and Germany to be valid until 1890, declaring that if either Power were attacked by a third Power the other would observe a benevolent neutrality.

The matter came before the Reichstag shortly afterwards, and the Chancellor, Prince Hohenlohe, on being pressed for information, fell back on the pledge of secrecy contained in the agreement, but stated that since 1890 there had been no unsatisfactory change in the relations between Germany and Russia, and that it was absurd to talk about British influence having affected Germany in the matter. A somewhat similar announcement was made by Baron Marschall, the Foreign Secretary.

The sting of the Bismarckian behaviour, as the Kaiser shows in his letter, is, of course, the insinuation that he was acting under English influence.

figures of Russia & Germany
as sentinels at the Yellow Sea
for the propagation of the Gospel
of Truth & Light in the East
I saw the sketches in the Xmas
week under the blaze of the
lights of the Xmas trees.
Also an album of photographs
representing the scenes of your
celebrated Wiesbaden before
the new standard of your
Regiment & the swearing in
of the recruits of your fine
Alexander Regiment as well as
a some fragments concerning you

Dear Miss
I 1848

Dear Miss

The new year has just
opened & the old year has
closed. But I cannot let
it close without a glance
at those lovely & brilliant
days of August, when I was
able to embrace you & it is
without thanking you for
your kind, splendid & generous
hospitality to Victoria & me.
With deep feelings of gratitude
to all those who have

He is very pleased about his sketch showing Russia and Germany as the symbolic sentinels of the Yellow Sea and in a contemptuous reference to the announcement about the English flying squadron he again makes use of that favourite adjective "ridiculous" which he so often applied to the English.

IX.¹

Berlin, 20/II, 96.

Dearest Nicky,

General Werder has the great honour and pleasure to be your guest and so I entrust this letter to his care. Let me once more thank you with all my heart for the picture and the letter you sent me for my birthday.² The attention was most kind and gracious at the same time, as the opening of the Canal was indeed something which I had very much at heart and which really was a success. I have sent the picture to Kiel where it is to be hung in my private apartments, the same in which your dear lamented father lived the last time he met me at Kiel. Werder

¹ Doctor Leyds, the Transvaal Secretary of State, had been staying in Berlin just before this letter was written on a mysterious visit, which attracted considerable attention in England. He left Berlin for Holland on February 17th.

² On the Kaiser's birthday, January 27th, the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, Count Osten-Sacken, presented him with an autograph letter from the Tsar and an oil painting representing Kiel Harbour at the moment of the opening of the Canal. The German Imperial yacht *Hohenzollern* was shown passing the Russian flagship *Alexander II*.

will also be the bearer of two photographs, One for you, as a little souvenir of mine, and one for Alix, to give her an idea of what my girl¹ looks like. She is a real piece of living quicksilver and tyrannises her papa tremendously.

Your Embassy has enquired about my being represented at the Coronation² at Moskau and I have named Henry as my representant. I should be very thankful if you would kindly see that the question of his rank is made out clearly, as I heard that your Master of Ceremonies has hinted to Radolin that he would have to follow all the *Hereditary* German Grandukes and Princes, even the son of the Prince of Montenegro. This is of course out of the question. My house as the reigning one in Germany is the first, and the Princes belonging to it go before the sons of the *Reigning* princes in Germany. I asked Wladimir³ about this when he was here, and he was of quite the same opinion, and told me he would mention the matter to you. Besides he is your brother in law,⁴ and as such he counts as one of your family, just as your Papa did for the Duke of Edinbrough⁵ at his coronation.

¹ The Kaiser's youngest child, Princess Victoria Louise, born September 13th, 1892, and married to Prince Ernest Augustus, Duke of Brunswick, in 1913.

² The Tsar was crowned on May 26th, 1896.

³ Grand Duke Vladimir, the Tsar's uncle.

⁴ Prince Henry of Prussia married Princess Irene of Hesse, elder sister of the Tsarina.

⁵ The importance attached by the Kaiser to the question of precedence is characteristic. When the Tsar Alexander III

I saw Aunt Sanny¹ at Oldenburg and on her passage here. She is very much affected by the slow and harassing death of her poor sister, and suffers much from sleeplessness, poor thing!

The Blue Book² in Parliament in London has once more proved how right our policy was in Oriental matters and how England has tried to get you and us others into trouble. In Transvaal their Coup de Bourse has miscarried by the will of Providence, and though some lives were lost, yet revolution, bloodshed, and general pillage have been stopped. They have behaved very improperly to me, but that leaves me untouched, whereas their mobilising their celebrated Flying Squadron³ against us, who have hardly any thing to speak of, made them supremely ridiculous.

was crowned on May 27th, 1883, the Duke of Edinburgh, who had married the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna, the Tsar's sister, followed immediately after the members of the Imperial family.

¹ Grand Duchess Alexandra Josefovna,⁷⁷ Princess of Saxe-Altenborg, married to the Grand Duke Constantine Nicolaevitch.

² A Blue Book on the Armenian question was issued in London on February 17th, 1896. A Blue Book on the Transvaal was issued on February 12th.

³ It was commissioned "in view of the existing crisis and as a precautionary measure in preparation for any emergency," as announced on January 9th, 1896. The crisis, of course, arose out of the Jameson Raid and the Kaiser's telegram to President Krüger. The squadron consisted of two first-class battleships, two first-class cruisers, and two second-class cruisers.

36 KAISER'S LETTERS TO THE TSAR

Now good bye, dearest Nicky, best love to
Alix, and believe me

Ever

Your most devoted Cousin and friend

WILLY.

X.

Coburg, 19/IV, 96.

Dearest Nicky,

... the merry wedding¹ which is taking place here and the faces of many of the guests remind me of two years ago when it was my good fortune to be able to help You to secure that charming and accomplished angel who is now Your wife. The reminiscences of April 1894² were also felt by the others and from that cause they all agreed that we should send You the telegram You will have got. I venture to trust that I did not say or promise then anything that You have not afterwards found in Your matrimonial life. May God's blessing be on You both especially in the next month when You are going to be crowned under the admiring assistance of the world. I thank You most heartily for Your kind letter You sent me through Werder³ the day I left for

¹ That of Princess Alexandra of Coburg to the Hereditary Prince of Hohenlohe-Langenburg.

² The engagement of the Tsar, then Tsarevitch, to Princess Alix of Hesse took place at Coburg in April, 1894, where she and the Tsarevitch were staying for the wedding of Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg and the Grand Duke of Hesse.

³ General von Werder, as mentioned in the preceding letter, had been staying with the Tsar.

the Mediterranean, he was so happy over his stay in Petersburg, having seen so many well known faces.

I quite agree with what You say in the end of Your letter about the Britishers, their fanfarronades against us make them supremely ridiculous, and no impression on me. The worse they are hampered in Afrika, the better for us in Asia. Now good bye, Dear Nicky, best love to Alix, goodspeed from Your Aff^{ate} cousin and friend

WILLY.

XI.

Letzlingen, 12/XI., 96.

Dearest Nicky,

Wladimir¹ is so kind as to take these lines with him to hand them over to you and will also be the bearer of my warmest "Grüsse" (Greetings). I am glad you are safe home again and that the brilliant tour² you made through Europe has not tired you too much.

¹ A dinner was given in honour of the Grand Duke Vladimir at the New Palace, Potsdam, on November 11th. On the following day the Grand Duke accompanied the Kaiser on a shooting expedition to Letzlingen, where this letter was written.

² Tsar and Tsarina had visited Austria, Germany, Denmark, England, and France, returning to Petrograd on October 31st, 1896. The Tsar met the Kaiser at Breslau on September 5th and again on his return journey at Wiesbaden on October 29th.

I am deeply sorry for the awful Bismarkian behaviour¹ which—though it is a “coup” solely aimed against me personally—nevertheless represents a breach of loyalty to your Government, and casts a slur on the memories of my beloved grandfather, as well as on that of your beloved father. I have already instructed my uncle, the Chancellor, how to speak in Parliament,² and hope you will be satisfied with the manner in which the whole treasonable affair is treated. I suppose that by this last stroke of the Prince and by the shamless way he is treating me in his Press—especially trying to make the people believe that I was and still am under “*English*”!

¹ “Prince Bismarck continues in the *Hamburger Nachrichten* and other journals his attempt to prove that under his guidance the relations of Germany and Russia were friendly and that his successor, Count Caprivi, was responsible for their deterioration. In particular he asserts that till 1890 there was an understanding between these two Powers that if one of them were attacked the other would preserve a benevolent neutrality.” (Berlin Correspondent, *Morning Post*, October 26th, 1896.)

² The debate on the Secret Reinsurance Treaty took place in the Reichstag on November 16th, four days after this letter was written. The Chancellor, Prince Hohenlohe, took refuge behind the pledge of absolute secrecy given with regard to the Russo-German negotiations between 1887 and 1890. He expressed the conviction that since 1890, when the secret treaty was said to have lapsed, there had been no unfavourable modification in Russo-German relations. “The assertion,” he added, “that at that time British, or indeed, any foreign influences had a contributory effect or that they have now must be dismissed as devoid of all foundation.”

influence—the clearer heads will begin to understand that I had reasons to send this unruly man with his mean character out of office. I place implicit faith in the hopes that you will kindly trust me, as you did till now, and that nothing has or can change between us two since we arranged our line of action at Breslau.¹

Wladimir has come from Paris with the best of impression that all is quiet there, which I can corroborate from the reports of my ambassador² who is on the best of terms with the Government and is quite full of admiration for the capabilities and sang froid of Hanotaux.³ The latter I hear is rather nervous about Turkey, but as I have

¹ The Kaiser and Tsar met at Breslau with great pomp and in the toasts exchanged particular emphasis was laid on “the traditional sentiments” uniting the two Emperors. The line of action arranged at that meeting was at the time believed to be summed in the phrase “complete accord in their views of the general situation especially as concerned the Eastern question.” It was understood that the two Emperors decided on the maintenance of the *status quo* in Turkey.

² Count von Münster-Ledenburg, German Ambassador in Paris since 1885.

³ Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Méline Cabinet. It was generally considered that M. Hanotaux as Foreign Minister during the Nineties was in favour of a policy based on reconciliation with Germany. [In an interview with the Paris correspondent of the *Morning Post* on January 8th, 1920, M. Hanotaux stated that the purport of these letters became very rapidly known in diplomatic circles, and contributed to, and caused, the growing spirit of unrest in Europe. He also wished to correct the suggestion that he was at any time in favour of a *rapprochement* with Germany.]

heard nothing alarming from there I suppose there is no real cause. He, I hear, is strongly opposed to any conference about Turkey, and in that is perfectly right.

On our frontier in Lithuania we have discovered and have localised several cases of leprosy. Some people have brought the infection over from the next places in the Baltic Provinces. I consequently have ordered a hospital to be built at Memel to place the poor wretches in it. The illness is a terrible one, and very catching, and I propose to you whether our frontier Provincial authorities could not combine in watching and looking for cases, by combining some doctors for medicine supervision ?

We have had magnificent sport and fine weather, and were very glad to see Wladimir here in his old place. With best love to Alix, your affectionate

Friend and cousin

WILLY.

XII.

Berlin, 3/III., 97.

My Dear Nicky,

As you kindly permitted, Col. v. Moltke¹ will in a few days have the great honour to be able

¹ " On the occasion of his reception yesterday at Tsarskøe Selo Count von Moltke, the German Emperor's Aide-de-Camp, handed to the Emperor a letter from the Emperor

to pay his respects to his Imperial chef. This gives me the opportunity of sending you a few lines of warm friendship in these trying times. I am most deeply grateful for the loyal, clear and statesmanlike way in which you grasped this most unfortunate Cretan affair,¹ and feel justly proud that our views on this subject are exactly alike. From the "family"² point of view you

William with photographs of the ceremony of decorating the colours of the Alexander Regiment of the Prussian Grenadier Guards with ribands presented by the Emperor Nicholas." (*Official Messenger*, Petrograd, March 8th, 1897.)

¹ On February 25th an apparently official *communiqué* was telegraphed from Petrograd stating that Russia had required Greece to recall her Fleet from Crete within three days. This programme was in accordance with that accepted by other great Powers, but curiously enough the Note, after laying stress on the union of Russia with France and her absolute understanding with Germany and Austria, made no mention of any other Power. England, to say nothing of Italy, was deliberately omitted and a pointed reference was made to "selfish friends" who might be encouraging Greece in her obstinacy. Later the Russian Foreign Office categorically denied responsibility for this *communiqué* and the Berlin correspondent of the *Morning Post*, telegraphing on the day before the Kaiser wrote this letter, suggested that it must have been touched up in Berlin. The Wolff Telegraphic Bureau declared that the *communiqué* arrived with the usual official imprimatur. The correspondent suggests that it was a mystery which might never be cleared up. The Kaiser's letter seems to show that Germany had taken a part in the issue of this *communiqué*, which despite his eulogy of the Tsar's action was an obvious blunder and in the end had to be contradicted.

² King George of Greece married the Grand Duchess Olga Constantinovna, second daughter of the Grand Duke Constantine, the Tsar's great-uncle.

must have gone through moments which may have taxed your affections to the utmost, and the resolve to do as you did must have been come to after many an internal pang. But you were perfectly right! And you see by the result that your *démarche* has rallied all the Powers, willing or not, to a common demonstration, which will I hope, make the Peace of Europe an undisturbed one. You have shown the world once more that if the 3 great Empires *marchent d'accord* and are joined by the other great Continental Powers, i.e. if the whole Continent keeps together in an unbroken front, the rest of the world *must* follow us, even the strongest! The King of Greece must be clean mad if he does not stop in his mad attempt to set the world on fire "*pour y allumer sa pipe.*" I am glad the Turks behave so soberly and place strong troops into Macedonia, there lies the greatest danger and that must be kept quiet by all means.

I send you with Moltke some instant photographs taken of the Parade after your cravats had been fastened to the colours of the Alexander Regiment. He is also to place into your hands the work which has been written about my dear Grandfather¹ and which is published for the Centenary of his birthday. His fine letters and speeches are the best characteristic of him I know.

¹ Probably "The Military Documents of H.M. Emperor William the Great" published by the Imperial command under the auspices of the War Office on March 21st.

Our ball¹ went off very well and the effect was simply magical, like a dream of old days gone by !

The cravats which I am going to present my Grenadiers are finished and I should be very thankful for a hint from you whether I can present them myself or whether you think it better to send our officers with them.

Now best love to Alix who I hope will be soon all right, and believe me Ever you most aff^{ate} cousin and friend,

WILLY.

XIII.

Neues Palais, 4/I, 1898.

Dearest Nicky,

The new year has just opened and the old year has closed. But I cannot let it close without a glance at those lovely and brilliant

¹ A fancy dress ball was given by the Emperor on February 27th, all guests being required to wear costumes of the year 1797. The Kaiser appeared in the uniform of a Colonel of the 1st Guards Regiment of that period. The uniform consisted of a dark blue cuirassier coat with broad turned-back lapels lined with red showing a long white waistcoat. Nine plaits of gold braid corresponding to the nine buttons, red pocket flaps and wrist bands with lace cuffs completed the decoration of the coat. A white sash, white stockings, and a natty white wig worn a little on one side and crowned, according to report, with a miniature three-master belonged to the costume. On the right hung a dagger and in the left hand the Kaiser carried a Spanish cane with gold knob and tassels.

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days of August,¹ when I was able to embrace you and Alix, and without thanking you for your kind, splendid even lavish hospitality to Victoria and me. With deep feelings of gratitude do I remember the pleasant hours I was able to spend with you, exchanging intercourse showing that we were of one opinion in the principles we follow in the fulfillment of the task, which has been set us by the Lord of all Lords. Each of us tries to do his best for his country's development and welfare, as is his duty! But in community we seek to procure to our countries the blessing of Peace!

May this New Year be a happy one for you dear Alix, and the whole of your house and country. May the plans which you mature be fulfilled for the welfare of your people. Henry's mission² is one of the help and countenance of your lofty ideals—without which no sovereign can exist—in promoting civilisation, i.e., Christianity in the Far East! Will you kindly accept

¹ The Kaiser and Kaiserin visited Petrograd, August 7th–13th, 1897.

² This mission was defined on December 16th by Prince Henry of Prussia at a banquet at Kiel just before he left in his flagship the *Deutschland* in command of the German squadron for China. In his speech the Kaiser told his sailors to “strike out with their mailed fist” in case of need. Prince Henry said “I am only animated by one desire, to proclaim and preach abroad to all who will hear as well as those who will not the Gospel of Your Majesty's Sacred Person (Das Evangelium eurer Majestät geheiligter Person).” Germany's defence of the Cross resulted in the annexation of Kiao-chau.

a drawing I have sketched for you, showing the Symbolising figures of Russia and Germany as sentinels at the Yellow Sea for the proclaiming of the Gospel of Truth and Light in the East. I drew the sketch in the Xmas week under the blaze of the lights of the Xmas trees !

Also an album of photographs representing the review on your birthday¹ at Wiesbaden before the new Standard of your Hussar Regiment and the swearing in of the Recruits of your fine Alexander Regiment as well as a scene from its barrack-ground. A book of memoirs² of the father of my Chief of the House, Count Wedel, will follow shortly, as the binding is not quite finished yet. He served under Napoleon the First in 1812 in Russia, was made prisoner by your troops and makes very interesting description of the campaign and of his captivity.—Victoria³ sends her best wishes, she was in bed for a long time and suffered much from nerves and a bad throat and only got up to-day for the first time. She had much worry on account of the two youngest ones⁴ who suffered from a bad attack of influenza which is raging here, and were laid up for nearly a month.

¹ May 6th.

² "Geschichte eines Offiziers im Kriege gegen Russland 1812, in russischer Gefangenschaft 1813 bis 1814, im Feldzuge gegen Napoleon 1815. Lebenserinnerungen von C. A. W. Grafen von Wedel." Berlin 1897.

³ The Empress had been suffering from a diphtheritic indisposition.

⁴ Princess Victoria-Louise and Prince Joachim.

Now good bye, dearest Nicky, best love to
Alix and my most respectful compliments to
your dear mama from Your most
devoted and faithful friend and

Cousin WILLY.

XIV.

Berlin, 28/III, 98.

Dearest Nicky,

General Werder¹ brought me your and Alix's kind messages from Petersburg and was beaming with delight of the souvenirs of his stay which as usual, you managed to render so nice and agreeable to him. I thank you most sincerely for all he transmitted to me from you, and need not add that I heartily reciprocate your wishes. The dear old General is not only a relic of the past, but firmly and by conviction deeply attached to you and your house; and he therefore is in my eyes a living piece of the old tradition which always united our families for the benefit of our countries and by that for the whole world.

I must congratulate you most heartily at the successful issue of your action at Port Arthur;² we two will make a good pair of sentinels at the entrance of the gulf of Petchili, who will be duly

¹ General von Werder had been a personal friend of Tsar Alexander III.

² Russian warships arrived at Port Arthur "to pass the winter" on December 18th, 1897.

respected especially by the Yellow Ones ! I think the way you managed to soothe the feelings of the " fretful Japs " by the masterly arrangement at Korea¹ a remarkably fine piece of d'plomacy and a great show of foresight ; which is apt to show what a boon it was that by your great journey² you were able to study the Question of the Far East locally and are now morally speaking the Master of Peking.

Radolin reported to me your very interesting conversation about China and your wishes about the Instructors in the Governments assumed as under the Russian sphere of influence. I have prepared an order to the German officers, but could not yet emanate it because it was impossible to fix a certain limit of territory without an indication on the map—a small pencil line on any piece of paper from you would put my mind to rest ; because I would be most unhappy, if by any misunderstanding the Officers, without their fault, trespassed on Russian territory from want of a real well recognised boundary line.

The idea which was beginning to be ventilated from over the Channel in the Press that Chinese affairs were to be decided by an international

¹ A treaty was signed between Russia and Japan on February 24th, 1897, for the maintenance of the independence of Korea under their military protection. On March 18th, 1898, Russia announced that she would abstain for the future from taking any active part in Korean affairs.

² Reference to Tsar's tour which he made as Tsarevitch in 1891. He visited China and Japan in April and May of that year.

Conference has been sharply repudiated here by me, for the reason that I soon found out that it was a masked attempt to tie your hands in the Far East, the relations to whom I think there are after all your own affair and not other peoples'!

The news from Henry are good, he is at Hong-kong refitting his ship. He made good friends with Saissoy Weliky and Navarin¹ at *Colombo* and they sailed together in perfect harmony for some days to the great astonishment of *other* people! Ahem! Which amuses me much as at the same time it gives me pleasure as Russian Admiral.

Colonel v. Moltke, my Aide-de-Camp, and Commander of your "Alexandriner" is the bearer of this and at the same time of a box with two hunting rifles² of small bore calibre of exceedingly good hitting qualities and a most stretched trajectory. I hope they will be of good use to you and enable you to kill many a good "Capital Hirsch"! (first-rate stag).

Now good bye, dearest Nicky, best love to Alix and Weidmannsheil from Ever your most aff^{ate} and devoted friend

WILLY.

¹ Russian warships sent to reinforce the Russian Pacific Squadron.

² "In illustration of the personal relations existing between the German Emperor and his 'neighbour in the East' it may be added that an aide-de-camp of the Emperor William left Berlin for St. Petersburg to-night in charge of two fowling pieces sent as a present to the Emperor Nicholas." (Berlin Correspondent, *Morning Post*, March 31st, 1898.)

CHAPTER IV

BRITAIN OFFERS ALLIANCE

“Private and very confidential” is the introduction to the important communication (letter No. XV.) dispatched by the Kaiser to the Tsar on May 30th, 1898. In it the Kaiser describes what he alleges to be England’s approaches for an alliance with Germany accompanied by “enormous offers.”

The first sign of this new British orientation, says the Kaiser, was an order from Queen Victoria to the British Press to cease the “unnoble and false game” of baiting Germany. Then came the direct offer of an alliance from a celebrated politician (did he mean Mr. Chamberlain?) to his Ambassador in London. The offer was renewed twice, and after many coy delays “Willy” is almost inclined to nibble, but first of all he wishes to know what “dearest Nicky” is going to offer in his turn.

In a later letter, dispatched in August, it appears that the English have reopened negotiations. Willy is inclined to think that they are trying to find a Continental army to fight for their interests, but Willy is determined it is not going to be his.

This is, of course, the Emperor's version, and it is probable that if the story were true William would have concluded the alliance and kept it secret, or only have hinted at it when he wanted to get things out of Russia. What is probably the truth is that Mr. Chamberlain, like other statesmen, found out, as the result of bitter experience, that it was impossible to come to any reasonable agreement with Germany. That he hoped for an agreement between Great Britain and Germany is evident from his Leicester speech in November, 1899, and in his interview with the New York Herald, given during his trip in the United States on September 7th, 1898.

In letter No. XVII. he fumes about the intrigues of "a certain meddlesome Power" (Great Britain, of course) in Crete, and strongly espouses the Turkish cause. "Save the Sultan" is the burden of his cry to the Tsar.

XV.¹

Berlin, 30/V, 98.

Private and very confidential.

Dearest Nicky,

With a suddenness wholly unexpected to me am I placed before a grave decision which is of

¹ The problem raised by this very interesting letter is whether the Kaiser, in this "frank and loyal" communication, is telling the Tsar the truth, or whether he is laying a trap for him. The "celebrated politician" must almost certainly be Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. At this period German opinion was following the career of Mr. Chamberlain, who had been called by Bismarck "ein wilder Junge," and it can scarcely be doubted that the Kaiser intended his

vital importance for my country, and which is so far reaching that I cannot foresee the ultimate

correspondent to understand that Mr. Chamberlain had made overtures for an alliance with Germany at Easter, 1898. Easter Day in this year was on April 10th, and it is remarkable that it practically coincides with the date on which the Kaiser sent a telegram of congratulation on Kitchener's Atbara victory to the British Ambassador in Berlin. The Kaiser was apparently explaining to the Tsar the reason for which he sent this telegram, which was to some extent a compensation for the telegram he had sent to President Krüger.

We have no definite evidence as to whether any such overture was made by Mr. Chamberlain, though it appears improbable at that moment. Mr. Chamberlain more than once indicated his leanings towards a closer understanding between the British Empire, the United States, and Germany, and it is noteworthy that at the end of this letter the Kaiser states that America is to join in the proposed alliance. Relations with Germany during this year were certainly better than they had been. During the month of September the German Press talked a great deal about an agreement that had been concluded with Great Britain. The suggestion that this agreement implied in some way a general understanding was not popular in Germany, and events proved that the agreement was no more than an arrangement concerning the Portuguese colonies, notably Delagoa Bay. It was to this agreement that Mr. Chamberlain referred in the interview given to the *New York Herald* on September 7th, 1898, quoted above.

The Berlin Correspondent of the *Morning Post*, telegraphing on September 9th, 1898, remarks, in reference to Mr. Chamberlain's interview: "It cannot be pretended that public opinion in this country displays any great enthusiasm for a policy of entente cordiale with Great Britain. The statement which has been made that the agreement in question binds Great Britain and the German Empire reciprocally to support one another against France in Egypt

consequences. The traditions in which I was reared by my beloved Grandfather of blessed memory as regards our two houses and countries, have as you will own, always been kept up by me as a holy bequest from him, and my loyalty to you and your family is, I flatter myself, above any suspicion. I therefor come to you as my friend and "confident" to lay the affairs before you as one who expects a frank and loyal answer to a frank and loyal question.

In the beginning of April the attacks on my country and person, till then showered on us by the British Press and people, suddenly fell off, and there was, as you will have perceived, a momentary lull. This rather astonished us at home and we were at loss for an explanation. In a private inquiry I found out that H.M. the and Alsace-Lorraine, should necessity arise, meets with very scanty credence."

It was not until more than a year later, after the Kaiser's visit to Windsor in November, 1899, that Mr. Chamberlain, in his famous Leicester speech of November 30th, 1899, openly expressed his desire for an alliance with the United States and Germany. He said: "We should not remain permanently isolated on the continent of Europe and I think this, that the moment that aspiration was formed it must have appeared evident to everybody that the natural alliance was between ourselves and the great German Empire." This offer of the olive branch sprang, we have reason to believe, from very definite proposals of alliance or entente which Count von Bülow made to him on the occasion of the Kaiser's visit. These overtures were a trap which, fortunately, Mr. Chamberlain discovered before it was too late. It may well be that this letter is a similar trap laid for the Tsar.

Queen herself through a friend of hers had sent word to the British Papers, that she wished this un noble and false game to cease. This is the Land of the "free Press"! Such an unwonted step naturally led us to the conclusion that something was in the air. About Easter a Celebrated Politician *proprio motu* suddenly sent for my Ambassador¹ and *à brûle pourpoint* offered him a *treaty of Alliance* with England! Count Hatzfeldt, utterly astonished, said he could not quite make out how that could be after all that had passed between us since 95. The answer was that the offer was made in real earnest and was sincerely meant. My Ambassador said he would report, but that he doubted very much whether Parliament would ever ratify such a treaty England til now always having made clear to anybody who wished to hear it, that it never by any means would make an Alliance with any Continental Power whoever it may be! Because it wished to keep its liberty of action. In 1897 (Jubilee year) this Principle was even put into verse,² saying that England needed no Allies, that *le cas échéant* it could fight the whole world alone, with the refrain: "We've got the ships,

¹ Count von Hatzfeldt-Wildenburg, German Ambassador in London from 1885 until his death in 1901.

² The Kaiser is referring to the famous music-hall song, "We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do," described in the Oxford Dictionary as "the Tyrtæan ode of the party ready to fight Russia in 1878." It lauded the policy of Lord Beaconsfield in sending a British fleet into Turkish waters to resist the Russian advance.

we've got the men, we've got the money too" ! The answer was that the prospect had completely changed and that this offer was the consequence.

After Easter the request was *urgently* renewed but by my commands coolly and dilatorily answered in a colourless manner. I thought the affair had ended. Now however the request has been renewed for the third time in such an unmistakable manner, putting a *certain short term* to my definite answer and accompanied by such enormous offers showing a wide and great future opening for my country, that I think it my duty to Germany duly to reflect before I answer. Now before I do it, I frankly and openly come to you, my esteemed friend and cousin, to inform you, as I feel that it is a question so to say of life and death. We two have the same opinions, we want peace, and we have sustained and upheld it till now ! What the tendency of the Alliance is, you will well understand, as I am informed that the Alliance is to be with the Triple Alliance and with the addition of Japan and America, with whom *pourparlers* have already been opened ! What the chances are for us in refusing or accepting you may calculate yourself !

Now as my old and trusted friend I beg you to tell me what you can offer me and will do if I refuse. Before I take my final decision and send my answer in this difficult position, I must be able to see clearly, and clear and open without

any back-thoughts must your proposal be, so that I can judge and weigh in my mind before God, as I should, what is for the good of the Peace of my Fatherland and of the world. You need not fear for your Ally in any proposal you make should she be placed in a combination wished by you. With this letter dearest Nicky I place my whole faith in your silence and discretion to *everybody* and write as in old times my Grandfather would have written to your Grandfather Nicholas I. !¹ May God help you to find the right solution and decision ! It is for the next generation ! But time is pressing so please answer soon !

Your devoted friend,

WILLY.

P.S.—Should you like to meet me anywhere to arrange by mouth I am ready every moment at sea, or on land to meet !

¹ There are two curious slips in this sentence. The Emperor Nicholas II was not grandson of the Emperor Nicholas I, but his great-grandson. Moreover, Nicholas I died in 1825, while the Kaiser's grandfather, William I, only ascended the throne of Prussia in 1861. The Kaiser was referring to the Tsar Alexander II, who was so enthusiastic a Germanophil that he had a private telegraph wire from his room in the Winter Palace to the Palace in Berlin, acting as his own telegraphist in order that inviolable secrecy might be preserved.

XVI.

Wilhelmshöhe, 18/VIII, 98.

Dearest Nicky,

Your kind permission allowing me to send dear old Werder to Moskau as my *représentant* for the ceremony of the unveiling of your dear Grandfathers statue gives me the opportunity to send you these lines through him. It is really an affair of sentiment which prompted me to send him and not a mere form of courtesy. Through Grandpapa I had often heard of Alexander II.¹ and when I had the honour to be presented to him I soon fell under his *charme* as happened to everybody who was honoured by his presence. To his kindness I am indebted that I wear the uniform of the splendid Grenadier Regiment, whose day it is to-day, and which is a firm bond uniting me with your fine army, which I shall value and cherish to my dying day.

Your dip omacy has just scored another great success in China,² to which I take the liberty of congratulating you, the more so as it was done

¹ The Alexander II memorial in Moscow was unveiled on August 27th, 1898.

² British prestige in China had just suffered a reverse owing to the sanctioning of a Belgian loan for the Pekin-Hankau railway despite the British Minister's protest (August 12th). The Chinese situation was summed up by Mr. A. C. Colquhoun in the *Morning Post* of August 11th, 1898. "Russia is firmly ensconcing herself in Manchuria, is seeking to veto the British loan for the Northern Railways extension, is arming to the teeth at Port Arthur and Talienswan, and is monthly pouring out reinforcements to the Far East."

without the firing of a single shot and without any unnecessary noise or bluster. The effect will be a great impetus given to your trade and the industrial establishments of your country. Henry has just telegraphed to me how kindly your authorities have received him, and are doing everything in their power to make his stay as agreeable as possible for him, which gives me the gratifying opportunity to thank you most heartily!

I am most astonished at the amount of bosh and blarney that is being ventilated in the newspapers of Europe¹ about my visit to Jerusalem! It is most discouraging to note that the sentiment of real faith, which propels a Christian to seek the Country in which our Saviour lived and suffered, is nearly quite extinct in the so called better classes of the sixteenth Century, so that they must explain the Pilgrimage forcibly by Political motives! What is right for thousands even of your lowest peasants is right for me too!

Since I communicated to you this June, England has still now and then reopened negotiations with us but has never quite uncovered its hand; they are trying hard, as far as I can make out, to find a continental army to fight for their

¹ The Kaiser's Eastern tour was attacked both by the French Press and also by the clerical Press of Vienna, which accused the Kaiser of trespassing on the domain of the Austrian Emperor, one of whose titles was "King of Jerusalem."

interests! But I fancy they wont easily find one, at least not *mine*! Their newest move is the wish to gain France over from you, and they in consequence have suddenly decided to send the Duke of Connaught¹ to the French Army Manœuvres, a nice little plan of Courcelles,² I think, who is ardently at work between Paris and London. I already once warned your people of him!

Now good bye, dearest Nicky, How I envy Werder seeing you and talking with you! Best love to Alix! Are you going to reintroduce the former uniforms again and buttons?—Believe me
Ever

Your most aff^{ate} friend and cousin

WILLY.

XVII.

Yacht Loreley, Stamboul, 20/X, 98.

Dearest Nicky,

During my stay at Stamboul³ I gave audiences to the Ambassadors. I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Mr. Sinovieff.⁴ I

¹ The Duke of Connaught was present at the French manœuvres in September, 1898.

² Baron Chodron de Courcel, French Ambassador in London 1894 to 1898.

³ The Emperor arrived in Constantinople on October 18th, 1898.

⁴ Zinovieff, Russian Ambassador in Constantinople.

found in him a most accomplished diplomatist, a man with a very clear head. An energetic character, in all, what one calls a powerful man: I congratulate you on such an excellent choice. We had a long conversation, and of course his opinion about Oriental matters was of the greatest value to me, it was a pleasure to listen to him. His going to see you gives me an opportunity to send these lines through him.

The conversation also turned on Cretan matters¹ and on the latest events that happened there. The source from which the latest excesses spring was doubtless not a clear one, and surely not the usual so called "mussulman fanaticism"

¹ So far as concerns the Cretan question Germany had, in the words of Bülow, "laid down her flute and left the concert room." The German troops were withdrawn from Crete on March 16th. At the beginning of September there had been hard fighting between British troops in the island and Mohammedan and Turkish troops, accompanied by the usual massacres. On October 20th, the day this letter was written, Turkey accepted the British ultimatum, and the Turkish troops proceeded to evacuate the island, while the Mohammedan residents retired to the mainland. On December 7th Prince George of Greece was appointed High Commissioner of Crete. The Kaiser at this time apparently did not despair of causing trouble in what remained of the European concert, and was anxious to let the Tsar in for another fiasco, such as that referred to in letter 12. The Kaiser's "laying down of his flute" caused little consternation in England. "For the rest the concert will do quite as much practical work without Germany as with her. Her bluejackets did but little to further the cause of order in Crete. Her shells when fired were usually ineffective." (*Morning Post*, March 18th, 1898.)

generally talked of in the European press. I venture to suppose that intrigues of a certain meddlesome Power have had something to do with them. In the course of our conversation Sinoview openly told me that the situation was far from reassuring and that the only possibility for getting out of the *impasse* was to make the Turks leave Crete bag and baggage! Whether that *must* be so I of course do not know, but as I had the opportunity of pointing out to you at Peterhof,¹ the question of Crete must be solved in a manner, that no general imbroglio comes from it which those scoundrels of Cretens are not worth. I have talked with many old and prominent Turks who have all assured me that the whole *People* had made Crete a question of *National honour*. That an evacuation *pure et simple* if acceded to by the Sultan would cost him authority, Crown, even perhaps his life, and that they were all deeply concerned and afflicted. I therefore venture to make this known to you with the hopes that in your wisdom you will kindly be able to find a solution, which is apt to save the Sultan's position *vis a vis* of his army and as Kalif *vis a vis* of the whole Mahometan world. You know by Osten Sacken's reports which motives made me "lay down my flute on the table." Because I felt and saw that a certain Power was using us all others as catspaw to get us to help her to take Crete or Suda bay, and I would not be of the party who are expected

¹ August, 1897.

to appear with bread and salt and on the top the keys of Crete praying the said Power to kindly look after the welfare of those poor darling "Cretans : who may one and all roast in hell" !

The recent events have shown me that my suspicions were right and that this certain Power means mischief and to use force. That is : They want to expel the Mussulmen, who are *born and Natives of Crete like the Christian insurgents*, only converted of Islamism, who are the landed proprietors, after these have lost everything they have, and give the property to the Christians who were till now their own paid tenants and their labourers and who revolted against their masters. That is the Cretan question in a nutshell ! And that is what I call downright robbery ! What an effect this act of pillage has had on the Mahometan world you have no idea, but I feel and see and hear it. What a terrible blow to the prestige of the Christian *en general* in the eyes of the Mussulman and renewal of hatred you can hardly imagine ! The Powers concerned in Crete have played a foolish and a most dangerous game, and that is what compels me to call your kind attention to the matter ! Remember what you and I agreed upon at Peterhof never to forget that the Mahometans were a tremendous card in our game in case you or I were suddenly confronted by a war with the certain meddling Power ! You as the master of millions of Mahometans

must be the best judge of this. If you quietly go on following the lead of the other Power in Crete as has been done till now, the effect will be deplorable upon your own Mahometan subjects and on Turkey, and you will lose *a* most precious *à tout* out of your play!

Therefore I implore you to give this matter once more your most serious attention and if possible find means by which you can save the Sultan from a dangerous and compromising situation *envers ses sujets* and solve the Cretan question in a manner acceptable to him. Don't forget that his Army fought valiantly and victoriously *for Crete* at Larisse and Domokos¹ and reconquered the Province. It would never forget or forgive another Power the expulsion of their brothers in arms and their Master from a reconquered Province! What a splendid opportunity for you to step in and save the Sultan from disgrace, the world from bloody war and gain the gratitude of all Mahometans! Otherwise revolution may come, and the Sultan's blood may one day be at your door!

I beg your pardon for intruding like this in your time and repose, but the situation is too serious, the interests at stake are too manifold, and I should not wish to see Russia lose her fine position she still now has retained here; all hoping eyes are turned to the great Emperor of

¹ Greeks defeated at Larisse April 23rd, 1897; at Domoko May 17th, 1897.

the East ; will he bring the hoped for solution ?
My perhaps rather rough openness may show you
how great and intense my love for you is. Best
love to Alix.

Your aff^{ate} cousin and friend,

WILLY.

CHAPTER V

THE TRIP TO JERUSALEM

Letter No. XVIII. describes the Kaiser's famous trip to Jerusalem. The Tsar is warned that Turkey is "very much alive." Altogether, notwithstanding the Kaiser's protest in letter No. XVI., it is clear that politics were not altogether foreign to the pilgrimage, and that the policy of rapprochement with Turkey which was later developed by Marschall and Wangenheim and brought the "Goeben" and "Breslau" to Constantinople was already in train.

The Kaiser's pride and interest in his Navy will be noted in letters Nos. XXII. and XXIII.

He is also proud of his family, and refers with high satisfaction to the coming of age of "my boy" (the Crown Prince) and the visit of his third son, Prince Adalbert, to Petrograd. As the Prince is still "only a middy," he hopes that the Tsar will see to it that "he does not get into wrong or bad company."

In letter No. XXII. there is a reference to the death of his mother, the Empress Frederick.

XVIII.

Damaskus, 9/XI, 98.

Dearest Nicky,

By the kind telegram you sent me to Jerusalem¹ you intimate that you follow our journey with interest; this encourages me to send you a few lines at the end of our tour with some of my impressions. They are so manifold that it is rather difficult to fix them.

In the first place Jerusalem has of course occupied our attention on account of the many places filled with reminiscences of our Saviour. The thought that His eyes rested on the same hills, that His feet trod the same ground is most stirring to one's heart, and makes it beat faster and more fervently. But I must frankly own that not all one sees relating to the Christian

¹ The Kaiser and Kaiserin entered Jerusalem on the afternoon of October 29th. The road was lined with troops and the houses decorated with German and Turkish flags. The ostensible object of the Kaiser's visit was the consecration of the Church of the Redeemer. Shortly before the Kaiser arrived on foot the street leading to the church was strewn with palms by Turkish officials. The dignity of the Imperial entry was rather impaired by the fact that the Kaiser and Kaiserin had to wear tropical veils to protect them from the heat. The Kaiser's arrival in Jerusalem was proclaimed from all pulpits in Berlin as a great religious event. "From Jerusalem," said the Kaiser in his address after the consecration, "there came the light in the splendour of which the German nation has become great and glorious, and what the Germanic peoples have become they became under the banner of the Cross. . . . As nearly two thousand years ago, so there shall to-day ring out from Jerusalem the cry voicing the ardent hope of all, 'Peace on Earth.'"

faith is exactly adopted for the promotion of this feeling. The manifold and different confessions and sects of our Common Christian faith have done too much in the way of churchbuilding, the erection of monasteries, chapels, etc., on so called "Traditional Holy Places." Which has led to a sort of concurrence or race for the highest towers or biggest churches, which do not at all harmonise with the sites they are erected on. In fact one could call it an exhibition of Church-models!¹ This has also affected the clergies of the different churches, who have a pleasure in intrigues and political designs fostering hatred instead of love, and leading to free fights and battles in the churches instead of Psalms and friendly intercourse. But what is worse still, they have created a worship of stones and wood, forbidden in the 2nd of the X commandments, instead of the Divinity itself. A Frenchman characteristically said to me: "*C'est l'adoration de la Pierre aux lieux'soit disant Saints', dont la Sainteté ne peut etre garantie, et la Divinite n'est pour Rien!*" Very true but most distressing to our Christian feeling. Very naturally this—I beg your pardon—Fetish adoration² has created a supreme contempt for the Christians with the Moslems.

¹ The Kaiser considered himself an expert in ecclesiastical architecture, and took a prominent part in encouraging the building of churches throughout Germany.

² A phrase that might offend a member of the Greek Church.

My personal feeling in leaving the holy city was that I felt profoundly ashamed before the Moslems and that if I had come there without any Religion at all I certainly would have turned Mahometan! The way Religion is understood in Jerusalem, it will never lead to the conversion of a single Moslem, or the growth of a single tree or the digging of a single new well, I am afraid that Religion in Jerusalem is often used by the Clergies as a cover for political devices and designs and that is very wrong and does Christianity a very great harm as the Moslems have long ago perceived this and treat us accordingly. I return home with feelings of great disillusion and with the firm convictions that our Saviour's grave quite certainly *is not beneath* that church of the Saint Sepulchre, which in its appearance and decoration compares very badly with the Mosque of Omar in its simple and awe inspiring grandeur!

Alas!—The most interesting and the finest town from the oriental point of view is no doubt Damascus. Beirut with its lovely villas, gardens and glades reminding one more of a town in the South of Italy or in Sicily. The Holy Land is simply terrible in its arid dryness and utter want of trees and water. But here everything is changed as if by Magic! The great River Barader¹ gives life and coolness and fosters vegetation of the finest description. The town is situated in the midst of vast gardens and shady

¹ The River Barada which runs through Damascus and converts the desert into a fruitful paradise.

glades all watered by small rivulets giving them the aspect—when seen from above—of a large fasanarie of the circumference of 2 square miles ! The quiet lovely courtyards with their Arabian Masonry, their shady nooks and murmuring fountains with fresh water in marble basins, are simply unique, like in a dream ! You would be delighted to be here as you understand so much about the East !

Our reception here¹ is simply astounding, never has a Christian—Giaur—Monarch been so feted and received with such unbounded enthusiasm. It is because I am a friend of their Sultan and Kaliph and because I always pursued an open and loyal Policy toward him ; the same I so often advocated for you, too.

The hatred of the English is strong and growing more and more intense—no wonder—whilst in the same time apace with it grows the open contempt of France, which has lost all the respect it once possessed of old ! That is the unavoidable consequence of the terrible quagmire the French² are now floundering about in their interior affairs, splashing the dirt right and left till the whole of Europe reeks with the stench ! Showing how far the corruption, lying and

¹ The Kaiser was welcomed by the Ulema of Damascus, who invoked Heaven's richest blessing on him, and was entertained at a banquet at the municipal hall.

² At this moment the Dreyfus case was at its height. It had been referred for revision to the Cour de Cassation on September 26th.

dishonour has already gained in the nation and before all in the army! Here people look upon them as on a dying nation, especially since the last and most ignominious retreat of the French from Faschoda!¹ What on earth has possessed them?! After such a first rate well arranged and plucky expedition of poor and brave Marchand? They were in a first rate position and able to help us others all in Africa who are solely in need of strong help! The news here have come as a thunderbolt on the Eastern people, nobody would believe them! at all event if it is true, what the papers say, that Count Mouravieff counselled France to take this foolish step he was singularly and exceptionally ill advised, as it has given your "*friends and allies*" a mortal blow here and brought down their ancient prestige here never to rise again! The Moslems call it France's second Sedan, and the poor French Consul I spoke to was in tears saying that all was crumbling to dust around him! France will never forget that piece of friendship nor will she ever feel very grateful for it.

These my dear Nicky are the most interesting of my observations which I openly and without backthought refer to after having seen with my

¹ On July 10th, 1898, Fashoda, an Egyptian military post that had been captured by the Mahdists in 1883, was occupied by a small force coming from the Congo, commanded by Major Marchand. The incident created acute tension between France and Great Britain. The difficulty was eventually settled by the French Government recalling Major Marchand on November 4th, 1898.

own eyes and heard with my own ears what is going on in this most interesting country. I found all my suppositions and combinations I so often laid before you absolutely confirmed; Turkey is very much alive and not a dying man. Beware of the Mussulmen if you touch their National honour or their Khalif. Best love to Alix

Ever Your most devoted friend and cousin

WILLY.

XIX.

Berlin, 6/V, 1900.

Dearest Nicky,

In haste I just manage to write these few lines to thank you from the depth of my heart for your kind and dear letter you so kindly sent me through Costia.¹ Indeed I do so well remember the events of your coming of age² and the ceremonies which accompanied it! How bravely you spoke your oath and how deeply moved your dear father was when he embraced you afterwards! How time has gone by! Now you too are ruler of a Great Empire and have children, and I have a grown up son! What a very kind idea it was of

¹ Grand Duke Constantine Constantinovitch, the Tsar's cousin.

² Never in the annals of the House of Hohenzollern had the coming of age of the eldest son been celebrated with such pomp and ceremony as on May 6th, 1900, when Kaiser William II's eldest son was the central figure. The Austrian Emperor was present. Despite a long day of festivities the Kaiser found time to write this letter to the Tsar.

you to send Costia and dear old Richter as well as the Gentlemen of your suite to be present at the coming of age of my boy. It makes me thankful and proud that you kindly take such an interest in the events which take place in our house, which is again a proof of the firm bond of friendship which we have inherited from our fathers and which, with Gods will and help may never cease to exist !

The ceremony of his taking the oath¹ on the old colours of the I Rgt. of the Guards was most impressive and very touching, the boy behaving most naturally and also very bravely before the great assembly of Princes, etc. With thousand thanks and much love to dear Alix and the wishes for a good summer I remain

Ever your most aff^{ate} cousin and
friend
WILLY.

P.S. Our grand manouvres this year between guards and II A. Corps are near Stettin ²; should

¹ After the service in the Chapel of the Royal Palace, the Crown Prince repeated the oath of fealty to the Colours. General von Plessen, after placing his helmet on his head, took the Colours and held them downwards before the altar. The whole congregation rose and the Emperor took up a position beside the Crown Prince, who repeated the formula of the oath as recited by General von Plessen. At the conclusion of this ceremony, the Emperor shook the Prince by the hand and repeatedly kissed him. (*Morning Post*, May 7th, 1900.)

² The manœuvres between the Guard Corps and the Second Army Corps took place in Pomerania during the first two weeks of September, 1900. The Tsar did not accept the Kaiser's invitation.

you care to see some of it you could come with your yacht to Swinemünde and from there I could take you straight up the river to the toon.

XX.

Swinemünde, 8/VI, 1901.

Dearest Nicky,

I send you these lines through my son Adalbert,¹ to whom I trust you will kindly extend your grace. It is the first foreign country which he visits, and as he is still only a middy I beg you will not make too much of him officially. He is young and steady, and I rely upon you that you will kindly see that he does not get into wrong or bad company.

With best love to Alix and her times I remain, with great pleasure anticipating our meeting on the sea,

Ever your most aff^{ate} cousin and friend,

WILLY.

¹ Prince Adalbert arrived off Petrograd on July 19th in the German training ship *Charlotte*. On July 23rd the Tsar wearing German Naval uniform paid him a visit on board. He was received at the gangway by the Prince and Count von Alvensleben, German Ambassador in Petrograd. The Emperor handed the Prince the insignia of the Order of St. Andrew.

XXI.

13/VI, 1901, Kiel.¹*Dearest Nicky,*

My best and warmest thanks for your kind messages through Paulis.² Everything shall be arranged as you wish. The fleet is to be anchored according to the wind, where the anchorage offers most cover. Boyes marked with Russian flags will be laid for your vessels. Aviso and torpedo-boats will meet you and guide you to your berth. Am not going to bring any diplomatist with me; not even the chancellor³ excepting your wanting to see him.

Waldersee⁴ will be there to “*melden*” (report) himself. Dear old Schouwaloff is in Berlin, and the whole garrison is making its pilgrimage to him; in the streets every soldier makes “front”; in passing his window the bands play your Hymn.

¹ The Kaiser was at Kiel for the launch of the battleship *Zahringen*.

² Captain Pauli, Russian Naval Attaché in Berlin.

³ Count Bülow had succeeded Prince Hohenlohe as Chancellor October 18th, 1900.

⁴ Field-Marshal Count von Waldersee was then on his way back from China. He had taken command of the Allied forces in China on September 27th, 1900. He left Peking on June 3rd, 1901, and arrived at Hamburg on August 8th. The proposed arrangements for meeting between Tsar and Kaiser must refer to the Danzig meeting of September 11th.

With greatest pleasure I look forward to meet you! *Weidmannsheil* (sportsman's greeting) for Alix.¹

WILLY.

XXII.

Wilhelmshöhe, 22/VIII, 1901.

Dearest Nicky,

Your kind letter of the 17th has just reached me this morning and I hasten to thank you for the kind feelings you express in its lines. I am most grateful and highly pleased to see by your letter that I shall really have the great pleasure of meeting you near Danzig.² The more so as I shall do it at the head of my fleet, which will be most eager to salute its Admiral, and which hopes that it will be able to earn his satisfaction when he inspects it. For it is well known among the officers and crews of my Navy,

¹ The Tsar's fourth daughter, the Grand Duchess Anastasia, was born on June 18th, 1901.

² The meeting of the Tsar and Kaiser at Danzig on September 11th, 1901, was heralded by a series of announcements and contradictions. There was clearly strong pressure being exerted on Russia both by Germany and France to manifest her preference for one or the other Power. When it was known that the Tsar would go to France, the French papers declared that he would not visit Germany. When it was announced that the Tsar would visit the Kaiser the German Press declared that the French visit was cancelled. Eventually the Tsar visited the Kaiser during the Naval manœuvres and then proceeded at once to the French Army manœuvres at Rheims, where he visited the Cathedral that German shells were to destroy.

that with your interest in and knowledge of naval matters you look upon your position as our Hon. Admiral in real earnest and that you inspect with the eyes of an expert. Consequently they will use every effort to show what they can do. I only beg you not to forget—what you perfectly know through our publications—that my fleet is just in the act of expansion and transformation. This of course is a drawback to its outward appearance, as old material and new and many different types are grouped together, by which the general appearance of the fleet shows a lamentable want of harmony and homogenousness.

You have kindly alluded to Adalberts visit, whom you have awfully spoiled by your grand hospitality; your praise makes Papa and Mama very proud. I hope he will always be worthy of it.

Your sympathy in my bereavement by the death of poor dear Mama¹ has deeply touched me. You are of course able to judge from your own sad experience when your poor father died, what it means to loose a parent who to all human knowledge might have been spared to live for many long years! Yet in this case the suffering was so terrible that one could look upon the end as a release, when the Lord called her away, and her last hours were I am thankful to say quite peaceful and painless. Thanks to the great speed of my Yacht and her consorts who

¹ The Empress Frederick died at Friedrichsruhe on August 5th, 1901.

took me in 28 hours from Bergen to Kiel, I was able to reach Cronberg in time to find her still conscious.

I have communicated your kind invitation to meet him, to the Chancellor,¹ who is deeply honoured, that you show him such confidence, as he was quite unprepared, I myself am very happy, because he is a very good *connoisseur* of Russian affairs and traditions and retains a thankful memory and deep attachment to your family from his stay in Petersburg. Regarding Count Lamsdorf² I shall of course receive him should he be on board your yacht; should that not be the case, and as we are not on shore at all, please do not trouble the poor Minister to make the long voyage to Danzig.

The heat we suffered from in Norway³ was appalling, up to 33°R. in the shade! Like in Syria! My suite some 20 men managed to finish off 167 bottles of Appollinaris in one day!—May the weather be fine without the above result when you come; the details of the programme will be forwarded to you by Paulis.

Best thanks for the “Anna Medal” just received which is pretty and gives me great pleasure

¹ It was announced in Berlin on August 26th that Count Bülow would be present at the Emperors' meeting. It was the first time that he was presented in his capacity of German Chancellor to the Tsar.

² Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, was present at the interview.

³ The Kaiser had been recalled from Norway by the death of the Empress Frederick.

and best love to Alix from your most devoted
and affate

WILLY.

XXIII.

Neues Palais, 17/XII, 1901.

Dearest Nicky,

Your dear brother Micha's ¹ visit is coming to an end and with great regret we see him leave. He is a cheering and most engaging young man, who has captivated everybody here, even my daughter! He shot very well and has bravely gone through all the "corvées" of an official dinner with presentation and cercle, though greatly relieved that there was no "speechifying." All the people who met him were struck by his clear, open, manly countenance and frank expression. He was a success! I am most grateful for the kind words about Dantzig, which make me uncommonly proud.

¹ Grand Duke Michael, the Tsarevitch, arrived in Berlin on December 15th, where he was received by the Kaiser at the station. Some surprise was caused by the arrival of the Tsarevitch in Russian and not in German uniform. The fact was that the Grand Duke was not attached in any capacity to the Prussian Army and the Kaiser hastened to appoint him Chief of the Uhlan Regiment (Emperor Alexander III). The Tsarevitch was present at a banquet at Potsdam on December 16th and went pheasant shooting with the Kaiser on the following day, returning to Petrograd that night.

I hope that on my visit next summer I may be able to show a more homogenous squadron and one of the new protected cruisers!¹ I am looking forward to our being together with pleasure! Colonel Kasnakof is here with the officers of my Dragoons and seems a remarkably nice officer; I am so glad to have them all here.

I beg you, as a souvenir of my dear Mama, to accept a pin from me and a locket for Alix; Micha will hand them over to you. With the sincerest wishes for a happy new year and Merre Xmas, I remain your loving

cousin and friend

WILLY.

¹ The Kaiser seems to be referring to the armoured cruisers of the "Prinz Heinrich" type.

CHAPTER VI

LECTURES ON SEA POWER

For the first time in the correspondence the Kaiser signs himself Admiral of Atlantic in letter No. XXVI.

The "Kaiser" and "Wittelsbach" classes of battleship, which were so strongly to reinforce his fleet, are being pushed forward with all speed, in accordance with that great programme of naval expansion which was laid down in the laws of 1898 and 1900 and the subsequent amendments.

To illustrate the importance of sea-power the Kaiser draws his correspondent's attention to the Koweit incident in the Persian Gulf, where there was some trouble between Great Britain on one hand and Turkey on the other, and he has something to say about sea-power and interior lines—a subject which became so familiar during the Great War.

Also he is aiming in letter No. XXVI. at the naval combination of Russia and Germany, with a view to curbing Japanese ambitions in the East. As evidence of this naval comradeship he mentions the fact that the secret plans of his latest ships had been handed over to the Russian Naval authorities.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir E. H. Seymour has effectively dealt in the letter reproduced in the notes with the Kaiser's remarks about the Allied operations against the Boxers mentioned in letter No. XXIV.

Letter No. XXVII. makes it clear that the popular nickname for the ex-Crown Prince, "Billy No. 2" or "Little Willy," was first started by the Emperor's sisters.

XXIV.

Neues Palais, 3/I, 1902.

Dearest Nicky,

These lines are to wish you a merry Xmas and a happy new Year. May God bless you and protect you and wife and children and keep you all sound in body and soul. May your work for the Peace of the world¹ be successful as well as the plans you are maturing for the welfare of your country.

I send you as Xmas present an officer's dirk²

¹ The Tsar's circular proposing a Conference of the Powers for the preservation of peace by disarmament was issued on August 24th, 1898. A second circular was issued in January, 1899, and the first Hague Conference sat from May to August of that year. It is noticeable that this is the first reference to the Tsar's peace proposals in the Kaiser's Letters.

² In the morning of September 13th the Kaiser and the Tsar, who were attending the German Naval manœuvres, repaid a visit to the Russian cruiser *Variag*, and the German Emperor issued a Cabinet order directing that all German Naval officers, following the example of the Russian officers, should wear the dirk of a Naval ensign, with a black sword knot, as an intermediate weapon. (*Morning Post*, September 14th, 1901.)

corresponding to the model I introduced into our Navy by order dated from the *Variag* which I beg you to accept as a souvenir of the kind visit you paid me off Danzig and of the merry hours we spent together.

This new sidearm is so popular among our officers that I believe they even go to bed with it.

My fleet, Henry and I are already looking forward to the day we shall be able to repay your visit¹ this year, and I shall be most glad to know when you expect us and where?

As you take such interest in our navy, it will interest you to hear, that the new armoured cruiser *Prince Henry*² is rapidly nearing completion and has already tried her engines on the spot with most satisfactory results. She is expected to join the fleet after her trials end of the winter. The new Line of Battleship *Charlemagne*³ the 5th of the "Kaiser Class" will, it is hoped, be ready for her trials at sea end of next week, and Henry hopes he will join him in a month.

The "Wittelbach" Class⁴ is being pushed

¹ The Kaiser and Tsar met at Reval, August 6-8, 1902.

² "Prince Henry" (*Prinz Heinrich*) had an official speed of 20 to 21 knots, and for armament had four 9·4 guns and ten 6·7 guns and twelve 15-pounders.

³ The "Charlemagne" (*Karl der Grosse*) was one of the "Kaiser" class of battleship, with a displacement of 10,976 tons, carried four 9·4 guns, and a secondary armament of eighteen 5·9 and twelve 3·3 guns.

⁴ The "Wittelsbach" class had a displacement of 11,613 tons, with the same armament as the "Kaiser" class. The British equivalent to the "Kaiser" class would be the

forward with all speed, and it is hoped will be able to join Henry's flag after the manouvres. This means an addition of 5 Line of Battleships, which will enable him to dispose of a fully homogeneous fleet of "Peacemakers" which no doubt will make themselves most agreeably felt and useful in helping you to keep the world quiet. The 5 new Line of Battleships have all been contracted for and have been begun. They constitute the first Division of the second Squadron.

Bye the bye I see by the papers, that the "historical" *Variag* has arrived at "Koweit."¹ That is a very wise thing that your flag is shown there. For it does not seem impossible that another Power was in the act of repeating the very successful experiment it made on the Nile, to haul down the Sultan's flag, land some men and guns, hoist some flag or other under a pretext, "Trafalgar," and to the "Wittelsbach" class the "Royal Sovereign" class of that time. In 1905 there were altogether sixteen battleships in the active battle fleet, of which eight were first class.

¹ It was announced on December 20th, 1901, that the Sultan had sent for the Sheik Mabarouk, of Koweit, to come to Constantinople. Mabarouk appealed to Great Britain for protection. A Bombay telegram of that date states that the Russian cruiser *Variag* had just arrived in dock, where her four funnels and six searchlights had greatly impressed the natives. The situation was complicated by a report that the Turkish flag, which had been hoisted over Mabarouk's residence, had been hauled down by the Commander of a British gunboat, who had it replaced by Mabarouk's own flag in token of the Sheik's independence. The incident was closed by an exchange of Notes between Turkey and Great Britain.

and then say: "J'y suis, J'y reste"! In this case it would have meant paramount rule of all the trade routes of Persia¹ leading to the Gulf, by this of Persia itself, and by that "Ta-ta" to your proposed establishment of Russian Commerce, which is very ably begun by the conclusion of the "Zollverein" with Persia by you.

The behaviour of the Foreign Power at "Koweit" sets into a strong relief the enormous advantage of an overwhelming fleet which rules the approaches from the sea to places that have no means of communication over land, but which we others cannot approach because our fleets are too weak, and without them our transports at the mercy of the enemy. This shows once more how very necessary the Bagdad Railway² is which I intend German Capital to build. If that most excellent Sultan had not been dawdling for years with this question the Line might have been begun years ago, and would now have offered you the opportunity of despatching a few Regiments from Odessa straight down to "Koweit," and then that would have turned the tables on the other Power by reason of the Russian Troops having the command of the inner Lines on shore against which even the greatest fleet is powerless for many reasons. The *main one*—according to

¹ A financial agreement was concluded between Russia and Persia January 30th, 1900. The Russo-Persian commercial agreement was not ratified by the Tsar till February 14th, 1903.

² The Baghdad Railway Concession was granted to a German syndicate at the end of November, 1899.

an adaptation of the Commander of Cronstadt's answer to Peter the Great for not saluting him—*“d'abord, parce que les vaisseaux ne peuvent pas marcher sur terre,”* whereas you may say *“cela suffit”*! The original answer of the gallant Admiral: *“D'abord parce que je n'ai plus de poudre,”* was vouchsafed the day before St. Nicholas to Henry by the Captain of the *Askold*. My squadron had received orders to feast your namesday by a rich display of bunting and of a Royal Salute. But when Henry enquired from the Captain v. Reitzenstein at what o'clock the ceremony was to take place, the latter declared he would do nothing of the sort, and even after Serge had sent word to him, flatly refused to hoist his pennant and to salute his Emperor, notwithstanding, that she is in commission and has her whole crew on board. My Squadron was deeply disappointed and much—if I may venture to say so—disgusted at the behaviour of this man!

I am sending you beside the dirk a most interesting book about the South African war, written by an Englishman, who wholly condemns the way it was entered into and the ends for which it was begun. It is very lucid to the point and shows that the Author maintains his impartiality to the last moment; a most gratifying exception to the rule now at work in England. The parallel he draws between this war and the war against American Colonies 1775–83 is most surprising and striking.

The bearer of my gifts is my Aide-de-Camp

Captain von Usedom¹—years ago for a time Henry's adjutant—he was in Command of the

¹ He was in command of the German troops which accompanied Admiral Seymour in his attempt to relieve Peking in June, 1900. The following quotation from his official diary was published in August, 1900, by the *Cologne Gazette*: “June 22nd, 1900. At 1 a.m. we continued our march, Seymour ordering ‘Germans to the front,’ but were delayed by junks running aground. At daybreak arrived before Chiku Arsenal, the walls of which were strongly manned. . . . The enemy abandoned the Arsenal, and we took possession, deciding to give up our further march towards Tien-tsin, about five miles distant. While taking possession the Chinese attacked us, and the Germans had to go to the support of the English Marines, who were hard pressed.”

[The Kaiser's remarks brought forth the following letter from Admiral of the Fleet Sir E. H. Seymour to the Editor of the *Morning Post* dated January 9th, 1920 :—

SIR,—In your issue of the 7th instant an extract from “Kaiser and Tsar” refers to our small North China Expedition in 1900, which I commanded. Owing perhaps to the ex-Kaiser's occasional uncertain memory, the statement about the Germans is not correct. I do not believe I ever gave the order stated, but if so it was only as a tactical arrangement for the moment of one day. Our own men were the most numerous body, and therefore took the chief part throughout; while the other seven nationalities all behaved well. Captain von Usedom was a fine officer and loyal to me, but I only made him Chief of my Staff after Captain Jellicoe (now Admiral of the Fleet) had been severely wounded, and because the Germans were next in numbers below ours. It is quite unnecessary for me to contradict another of the statements made, and I only write this letter in justice to the gallant seamen and marines that I had the honour to command.

Yours, etc.,

E. H. SEYMOUR,

Admiral of the Fleet.]

Hertha during the China affair, and it is he who saved the Seymour Expedition and brought it safe back to Tientsin. He was in fact the Admiral's Chief of the Staff and to him was given the now "historical" order of which my "blue jackets" are so proud "Germans to the Front," when the British Sailors refused to go on any farther. He was not present at Danzig, having injured his leg by a fall from his horse, so I thought you would like to hear from his own lips the record of what men composing that ill-starred expedition suffered.

Now dearest Nicky, goodbye, best love to Alix, Micha and your Mama from

Ever Your
most aff^{ate} and devoted Cousin
and friend

WILLY.

XXV.

Berlin, 30/I, 1902.

Dearest Nicky,

Let me once more thank you by letter for your kind thought of sending your favourite Aide de Camp Obolenski¹ with the presents for my birthday. The "pelerine" is most practical

¹ Prince Vladimir Nicolaievitch Obolensky, Colonel of the Preobajensky Guard Regiment.

and will do good service in all weathers, *notabene* in going in a launch to and from the *Standart*¹ and *Hohenzollern* at Reval! Then the vases are quite charming: the blue one with "pate sur pate" is an exquisite specimen and a most handsome decoration in my salons. Obolenski accompanied me all through the different functions of my birthday and will be able to tell you what a poor, overworked "Landesvater" (Father of his Country) has to go through before he is able to sit down quietly for a morsel of food and a cigarette! However we managed to be very jolly as all my *Geschwister* (brothers and sisters) were here and Henry managed to keep the family alive, elated as he is with the prospect of paying the Americans and their fair ladies a flying visit,² which to our great amusement seems to create

¹ Russian Imperial yacht.

² Prince Henry arrived in the United States on February 23rd, 1902. According to the correspondence his trip was slightly marred by the brass bands that welcomed the special train at night and ruined his chance of sleep. There were certain breaches of tact, which did not increase his popularity in America. Washington had left a sword that had belonged to Frederick the Great appending the condition in his will that it should not be taken from the scabbard except in the defence of Fatherland. The Prince, of course, drew the sword. Also, he sent a wreath nine feet in circumference composed almost entirely of laurel and tied with a broad purple ribbon to Grant's tomb, but he did not lay it on the tomb himself. He preferred to lunch with one of the "Four Hundred" of New York, much to the indignation of patriotic Americans. Eventually, on March 11th, he returned to Germany on board the liner *Deutschland* with 300,000 roses packed in ice to decorate his table.

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considerable "toothache" in the shores on the side of the Channel!

But I must not take up your precious time any longer; Obolenski brings you the tables of the Russian, American, and Japanese Navies drawn up according to the latest reports, and photographs from Danzig, upon which I always look back with thanks and pleasure as your most dutiful and aff^{ate} cousin and friend

WILLY

Best love to Alix.

XXVI. General commando, Posen, 2/IX, 1902.

Dearest Nicky,

Since my return from Reval I have been very busy, as you will have seen by the papers. Now that my illustrious guest the King¹ has left after a successful visit I am able in the "trouble" of manouvres to spare a few minutes, which will consecrate to these lines I send you. For needless to say so, the souvenir of Reval is still vivid before my eyes; with it the kindness and friendship you showed me, the fine military display, the efficiency of your fleet at target practice and at evolutions and last not least the many hours of amiable and undisturbed companionship with friendly intercourse I was allowed to spend with you, all that is still forward in my thoughts and

¹ The King of Italy, in Germany August 27th-31st, 1902.

still fully occupies my suites and my mind that I feel it would be a decided want of tact and education if I did not once more thank through this letter from all my heart.

The whole stay was a continuous treat for me ; but it was more. The school of Naval gunnery which was shown to me by your orders is the most vital part of the development of the Navy and of its preparation for "business." Through this permission you showed me a special mark of confidence—in fact a reciprocity for what I showed you at Danzig—which implies a complete trust in the visitor, only possible between men having the same ideas and principles, and which between two Monarchs means united work in the common cause of preserving the peace for their countries. This trust and faith you have shown me is, I can assure you—not misplaced, for I fully reciprocate it. That is shown by the fact that the secret plans of my newest ships—invisible to the foreigner—were handed over to you and to the discretion of your Naval authorities. To these facts add that we both have the same interest in the development of our Navies, that the passion for the sea is inborn to us, that will suffice to show that we must look at our two navies as *one* great organisation belonging to *one* great Continent whose interest it must safeguard on its shores and in distant seas. This means practically the Peace of the World.

For as the rulers of the two leading Powers of the two great Continental Combinations we are

able to exchange our views on any general question touching their interests, and as soon as we have settled how to tackle it, we are able to bring our Allies to adopt the same views, so that the two Alliances—i.e., 5 Powers¹—having decided that Peace is to be kept, the World must remain at peace and will be able to enjoy its blessings. This is a vivid illustration of the fact that the two Alliances hold the balance of Europe and of the World in keeping in close communication with each other by the annual meeting of their two leaders to exchange their views.

This is the more necessary as certain symptoms in the East seem to show that Japan is becoming a rather restless customer and that the situation necessitates all coolness and decision of the Peace Powers. The news of the attachment of the Japanese General Yamai²—former leader of the Jap troops in China—to the Legation at Peking in order to take in hand the reorganisation of the Chinese Army—i.e., for the unavowed object of driving every other foreigner out of China—is very serious. 20 to 30 Million of trained Chinese helped by half a dozen Jap Divisions and led by fine undaunted Christian hating Jap Officers, is a future to be contemplated not without anxiety; and not impossible. In fact it is the coming into reality of the “Yellow

¹ The Kaiser pretends to consider that the “encirclement” of Great Britain is complete.

² Major-General Yamai was Military Attaché at the Japanese Legation in Peking in 1902-1903.

Peril" which I depicted some years ago, and for which engraving I was laughed at by the greater mass of the People.

As it is interesting to see how the distribution of Naval Power would be in case complications should arise in the East I have made a rough and approximate calculation, which has taken the form of a table, which I submit to you. The numbers are not accurate as the ships are constantly changing, but are more to serve as a general clue. The vessels nearing completion are counted as available, and the oldest ones as well as smaller ones are omitted.

The review went off very well and the V Corps was as good as when you saw it near Görlitz. Everybody was glad to welcome your officers and the Governor General Tschertkoff.¹ I am most grateful you allowed them to come and am quite charmed with the whole bearing of the fine old soldier, who has shown himself exactly as you described him to me. I have given him the Black Eagle to show how I appreciate his visit. He as well as all your officers—who made an excellent impression on me—were deeply afflicted and of course we all too including my wife, at the mishap of Alix; God grant she may soon recover, and that she may feel no ill effects.

With Victoria's and my best love to you both I remain your most devoted friend and cousin,

WILLY,

Ad. of Atlantic.

¹ The Governor-General of Warsaw.

XXVII.

Berlin, 14/I, 1903.

Dearest Nicky,

These lines will be presented to you by my boy. My sisters generally call him "Billy no. 2" or "little Willy"¹ to discern him from his father. I place him under your kind protection and hope you will be satisfied with his manners; he is still very young and only beginning to form himself, so that should he make any "*bevues*" you will kindly overlook them. Besides these lines he is the bearer of a number of Xmas presents for you which I was unable to send earlier. 1/ a large Model of our new (H) class of battleships,² which you said at Reval would please you to accept. Schimmelmann is able at any moment to explain it to you. 2) a water-colour representing the history of the forms and colorings of our Regimental colours and Stan-

¹ The Kaiser was generally called by his brothers and sisters "big brother." The Crown Prince arrived in Petrograd on January 16th, 1903. On January 19th he attended the ceremony of the "blessing of the waters" before the Jordan Gate of the Winter Palace. "After the ceremony a State luncheon was given by the Emperor and Empress, at which the Crown Prince handed the Emperor Nicholas in the presence of the German Ambassador a model of the battleship *Braunschweig*, the latest battleship added to the German Navy, as a gift from the Emperor William. Captain Baron von Schimmelmann, the German Naval Attaché, explained the model." (*Morning Post*, January 20th, 1903.)

² The *Braunschweig* carried four 11-inch guns. She had a displacement of 12,997 tons and a speed of 18 knots.

dards since the time of the Great Elector down to my time. The first half is from the Elector to 1806, the second 1900.

3) The whole of the Uniforms, arms, cuirasse and accoutrements belonging to your new Cuirassier Regiment,¹ which I hope will fit you. They are in charge of my old Kammerdiener you saw at Reval "Father" Schultz. He is to instruct your "man" how to put on the different things. 4) Some brochures and Magazines which I thought might perhaps interest you in your hours of leisure.

With respect to the colours of our army I have a request to make to you. On the first (Electoral Table) there are the first colours which belonged to the Regiment of Guards of the First King given after his coronation as Frederick I. Blue with gold flames, crowns and eagles, & white with black Eagle & gold crowns. These colours had been kept in our Arsenal until in the 7 years' war, they were carried off from there by the Russian troops that occupied Berlin, with many other things out of the Arsenal. We are now with great care and difficulty re-writing the history of our colours and I would be so thankful if you kindly would allow them to be copied in aquarell or oil so that we may be able to have an authentic likeness of them, as they are in Petersburg.

¹ The "Nicholas II. Emperor of Russia" (1st of Westphalia) VIIIth Regiment of Cuirassiers of the Guard.

Trusting that all will come off well and envying
my boy the pleasure of seeing you

I remain

Ever your most affate friend and
cousin " BILLY " no. 1

CHAPTER VII

EVE OF WAR

In pursuit of his aim to foment war between Russia and Japan, the Kaiser in letter No. XXX., written on the eve of the outbreak of hostilities, insists that Korea will and must be Russian, though the Russian Note of October 3rd, 1903, recognised Japan's preponderating interests in that province. In the same letter, however, he has the audacity to speak of the British Press "blowing at the flames where they can." In the next letter, No. XXXI., he hopes that "the Japs" may listen to reason "notwithstanding the frantic efforts of the vile Press of a certain country." He also sends some information about the clandestine arming of Chinese forces by the Japs—information which he describes as "signals" from the Admiral of the Atlantic to the Admiral of the Pacific.

In letter No. XXVIII. there is an amusing reference to the Sultan and an uncomplimentary reference to the "Archplotter of Sofia" (ex-King Ferdinand of Bulgaria).

Letter No. XXX. mentions proposals which he and the Tsar were making concerning Danish neutrality,

and in view of the "bygone days of '64" the Kaiser delicately suggests that the proposals should come from the Tsar rather than from himself.

XXVIII.

Neues Palais, 19/XI, 1903.

Dearest Nicky,

It is impossible for me to pass over the sudden and tragic death of that sweet little sunshine,¹ without sending you just a word to tell you, how deeply I feel for you all in this sad affair. It is really very difficult to realise the fact; that this darling child is no more among us! How joyous and merry she was that day at Wolfsgarten² when I was there, so full of life and fun and health, and to think that one shall never see

¹ Princess Elisabeth of Hesse, only daughter of Ernest Louis Grand Duke of Hesse by his first marriage with Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. This marriage was dissolved in 1901. The Russian Imperial Family was staying at the hunting box in the depths of the Bielowiec forest, the home of the almost extinct *aurochs*, which was only hunted by Royalty. The Princess, who was only eight years old, was staying with the Tsar's children. The story current in Russia was that she was poisoned. It is said that one day at dinner the Emperor Nicholas served with a plate of soup passed it with some smiling remark about "ladies first" to the little Princess, who died the same night. It was universally believed in Russia that she was killed by poison intended for the Tsar. An official *post mortem* was held and it was announced that the child had died of abdominal typhus.

² Near Darmstadt, where the Tsar and Kaiser met on November 4th and 5th, 1903, a fortnight before this letter was written.

her again in this world! What a terrible heartrending blow for poor Ernie,¹ who doated and adored that little enchantress! May Heaven give him power to bear up under such a blow.

I am still under the charm of the two days I was able to spend with you and they remain a delightful souvenir for me. You remember our conversation about the Balkans and Turkey, and my later telegram with my instructions to my Ambassador² to give the Sultan an energetic lecture that it was hightime for him to at last conform himself to the "Mürzteg Programme?"³ Well these instructions have led to a conversation between my Ambassador and the Sultan a few days ago, which took an hour and three-quarters. The Sultan was very tough; and decidedly in the idea, that a refusal to comply with the wishes of Russo-Austria backed by me, would bring no

¹ The Grand Duke of Hesse.

² Baron Marschall von Bieberstein. The Kaiser appears to be very anxious to persuade the Tsar that he is supporting Russian and Austrian policy in Turkey. In this connection a telegram from Constantinople, dated November 14th, and published in the *Morning Post* on November 16th, 1903, has a certain interest. It was rumoured in Constantinople that the Sultan was going to accept the Austro-Russian reforms "on the advice of the British Ambassador, who was asked unexpectedly after the Selamlık on Friday to have a private audience of his Majesty. The audience lasted more than an hour."

³ The programme of Macedonian reforms drawn up by Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, and Count Goluchowsky, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, in their meeting at Mürzteg, October 9th, 1903.

great harm to him! The Ambassador had to make use of every power of expression feasible for him versus a Monarch, to bring the gravity of the situation home to His Majesty, and left him "a sadder but a wiser man" after he had made it quite clear to him that on no account whatever would I raise a hand in his support or speak a word for him, should he involve himself and his country into serious consequences, by refusing to fulfil the wishes of H.M. the Russian and the Austrian Emperors, who had shown almost angelic patience and forbearance with his bearing, and who strictly adhered to the February¹ and Mürzsteg Programm backed up by me. The Ambassador is under the impression that very animated intrigues are going on in the Palace among a band of organs of very shady nature who surround the Sultan and with incredible lies managed to abuse of his credulity and to keep away the Grand Vizier, whose influence is feared by them, and who is perfectly in harmony and loyally "*d'accord*" with our 3 ambassadors.

Another interesting piece of news reached me from Sofia. The Prime Minister² of the "Arch-plotter"³ in a conversation after dinner, gave utterance of his and country's extreme dissatis-

¹ The preliminary Austro-Russian Reform Programme was presented to the Porte on February 21st, 1903.

² Major-General R. Petrow.

³ Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was elected Prince of Bulgaria in 1887. He was recognised by the Powers as Tsar of the Bulgarians in 1909.

faction at the Mürzsteg Programme! That it was not enough for them, and that they must insist on getting more. But as he was quite sure that the Imperial Powers would not grant more, they all in Bulgaria turned to Italy, England and France! From these countries alone hope was forthcoming for the future of Bulgaria and Macedonia; alone they would bring "freedom"—i.e., Parliaments and Republics—for the suppressed Balkan Races! This shows you again what I hinted at in our conversation, that the "Crimean Combination" is forming and working against Russian interests in the East. "The democratic countries governed by Parliamentary majorities, against the Imperial Monarchies." History always will repeat itself.

With best love to Alix and hopes for her speedy recovery I remain Ever Your true and devoted friend and cousin

WILLY.

XXIX.

Neues Palais, 4/XII, 1903.

Dearest Nicky,

Enclosed I send you some interesting material for your amusement. Articles about politics, about naval matters, a description of floods in Petersburg—which I do not know whether it is right—and an illustrated magazine about the last manœuvres. Perhaps you will find topics which

will remind you of our last conversation, and show how the development of events is looked upon in Europe, perhaps sometimes different from the aspect at Petersburg. If they are old news I beg your pardon, but as you said at Wolfsgarten, it did not matter, provided it were news relating to the interests common to the surety of our 2 nations I venture to submit them to you ; they come from cuttings from quite different sources and papers. How glad I am that Alix is all right again and free from that abominable pain ! The shooting results are very fine, and I wish you " Weidmannsheil " with all my heart. I sent Gen.Adjut. v. Loewenfeld¹ to London to give the long service cross (25 years) to uncle Arthur, and in the same time to reconnoitre the frame of mind and the flow of public opinion about the Eastern question. His mother is an English lady, so he speaks it very well. What he saw and heard I shall let you know.

The Officers in Command of my troops in China have been for a long time already ordered closely to survey the intercourse between Japs and Chinese Military and the growing influence of Japan with the Chinese Army, 2 days ago I got a report that the Japs are clandestinely

¹ General Alfred von Loewenfeld was General *à la suite* from 1901 to 1904, but he does not appear to have had an English mother. There does not appear to be any reference to his visit in the British Press, nor is the Long Service Cross among the German decorations given as conferred on the Duke of Connaught, who was appointed Prussian Field-Marshal in 1906.

arming the Chinese behind your and my backs against us. That they have concluded a secret-Engagement with China to provide the army with 20,000 new repeating Rifles and ammunition, 48 field guns, and 12 Mountain guns (rapid firing), with ammunition, to be there till next summer. The Chinese troops are drilling¹ day and night, and, as the people who watched them for instance at Pao-tins-fu say, remarkably well! Commanded by Jap instruction officers, whose numbers are steadily increasing! Nice business! I believe the Chinese might not to be allowed to have Japs in their Army! They are sure to rouse Chinese hopes and inflame their hatred against the White Race in general and constitute a grave danger to your rear in case you would have to face a Jap adventure on the Seashore.

Begging your pardong for my liberty I have taken, I hope the Admiral of the Pacific will not be angry with the Admiral of the Atlantic's signals, who is always on the look out! Ta, ta, best love to Alix from

Your devoted friend and cousin toujours *en vedette!*

WILLY.

¹ In an article published in the *Morning Post* on December 31st, 1903, a Special Correspondent says that foreign drilled soldiers were becoming fashionable all over China. He describes a review of these troops and comments on the smartness of the men.

XXX.

Berlin, 3/I, 1904.

Dearest Nicky,

These lines are meant to reach you on your Xmas Eve and will I hope find you well and happy with Alix well again at your side and the merry little company¹ romping around you in the glimmer of the light of the Xmas tree. I once more wish you every blessing of Heaven on all your ways, may your precious life be spared to us all as well as of all those dear to you. May your plans meet with full success: if in peaceful ways, softly as a rippling brook; if by the decision of the arms may they be victorious and your Standards wave enwreathed with fresh laurels.

Many thanks for your kind letter from December 20th which is a new testimonial of your confidence so precious to me. We only shall have to be careful lest the scheme, so auspiciously started, should get wrecked on some question of detail.² When I parted from

¹ The Tsar's four daughters, the Grand Duchesses Olga, Tatiana, Marie, and Anastasie, aged from two to nine.

² The secret documents taken from the archives of the late King of Denmark, Frederick VIII, and recently published by the Danish Government, give full information concerning the German negotiations with Denmark to which the Kaiser refers in this letter. On December 17th, 1903, King Christian IX visited Germany and in the train between Berlin and Potsdam the Emperor prophesied that in the event of a Russo-Japanese war the British Fleet would undoubtedly attack the Russian ports of the Baltic and that the German fleet would defend Danish waters, but that Denmark ought "to defend its neutrality" against England.

your dear old Grandfather the King I was under the impression that the subject occupied his mind, and that he was meditating, in order to find the form best suited to the requirements of his country. As base for our conversation, I used some Danish Newspaper Articles about Danish neutrality.¹ As their comments appear to have attracted a good deal of attention in Denmark, I enclose a short extract of them, which may serve as help to show you the nature of the difficulties that the King seemed to foresee and to apprehend from his people at home. Hence it becomes evident that the King, as the party most concerned in the issue of the question, is doubtless first of all entitled to an expression of his views, and to have them worded and drawn up by somebody possessing his absolute confidence. It therefore struck me as the next

The King noted the conversation, of which he informed his Ministers. These German overtures were renewed later on, notably in 1906 and 1907.

¹ Dr. Dillon, writing in the "Eclipse of Russia" of a time some eighteen months later than the date of the Kaiser's letter, says: "What seemed to me probable . . . was that the Tsar had accepted the Kaiser's proposal for the joint occupation of Denmark, but, as in the case of the secret Treaty, he felt uneasy about the impression it would make on his Danish friends, and in order to get on the safe side in advance had requested Wilhelm to sound the King of Denmark. Translated into diplomatic language, this would have meant the adherence of the Danish State to the Russo-German alliance." From this letter it would rather appear that the Kaiser was anxious for the Tsar to sound King Christian.

step to be taken in this matter would be the best, if you were to write to your grandfather to submit the proposals to us as soon as they have attained a form acceptable to him, and that we look forward to his giving us the full scope of his ideas concerning the question of the Danish neutrality. Considering the bygone days of '64 it is clear that the Danes still look a little askance at us, and therefore they will view a proposal relating to their destiny with more favour if it comes from you; who are so nearly related to their King, and who are the son of a Princess passionately adored by them.

I send you enclosed some interesting articles. One about our Navy and Russias Policy from the 19th Century; one about your commercial Fleet, 2 English Paper cuttings from a penny Newspaper¹ which is daily read by thousands in the streets of London and elsewhere in England. It is to show you with what stuff and in what a tone this Press is feeding its readers for many weeks already, and how they are blowing at the flames where they can.

¹ Cf. leading article, *Morning Post*, December 31st, 1903: "Japan's whole policy and prospects are threatened by the Russian policy in the Far East, so that Japan is in the position of feeling her national existence challenged. . . . Great Britain is absolutely bound to help Japan in case Russia should find an ally. But the best way to prevent Russia from finding an ally is for Great Britain to make plain at once that she will assist Japan and that she is able and ready to do so."

To us here on the Continent this hypocrisy and hatred is utterly odious and incomprehensible. Everybody here understands perfectly that Russia following the laws of expansion must try to get at the Sea for an iceless outlet for its commerce. By this law it is entitled to a Strip of coast where such harbours are situated (Wladiw. Port Arthur) their "Hinterland" must be in your Power so as to allow your building the Railways which are to carry the goods to the ports (Mandschuria). Between the two ports is a tongue of land which may—in one adversary's hand—become a new sort of Dardanelles. That is impossible for you to allow. These "Dardanelles" (Korea) must not threaten your communications, thereby hampering your commerce. That is already on the "Black Sea" and that is not what you went to the Far East for! Therefore it is evident to every unbiassed mind that Korea must and will be Russian. When and how that is nobody's affair and concerns only you and your country. That is the opinion of our People here at home and therefore there is no excitement or "*emballement*" or war rumors or anything of that sort *here*. The sure end that Korea will once be yours is a foregone conclusion here like the occupation of Mandschuria, hence nobody trouble themselves about it here!

The new years cards will amuse you, they were taken at your arrival at Wiesbaden! a little souvenir of the happy days. A happy new

Year and Weidmannsheil (hunter's good wishes) also for "Big game"¹ from your devoted
cousin and friend,

WILLY.

XXXI.

Neues Palais, 9/I, 1904.

Dearest Nicky,

Only a line to tell you how my thoughts are occupied with you in this serious time. May God grant that every thing will come off smoothly and that the Japs may listen to reason; notwithstanding the frantic efforts of the vile Press of a certain country, that also seems to have money left to sink it into the Japanese mobilization abyss. I thank you for the *communiqué*² you sent me officially through Osten-Sacken. It is very clear and will doubtless lead to a strengthening of Peace. I hope it will appease the feelings of the impertinent war party in Japan, as it will surely satisfy the rest of the Powers anxious for

¹ War.

² The Berlin Correspondent of the *Morning Post* telegraphed on January 5th, 1904, that the German Government had received intelligence from St. Petersburg which cast a favourable light on the prospects of peace in the Far East. He mentions the report that the Tsar had expressed to the Kaiser his resolve not to provoke Japan into a declaration of war.

their commerce, to whom "open door" was once promised.

I send you a copy of "Marine Rundschau" with an article about "ironclad cruisers," written by L. This L is a mask under which I hide myself, for I wrote it, but nobody has a blessed notion except Tirpitz. As material for my article—written in November—I managed to get very interesting details about "*Rivadaria*" and "*Moreno*"—now presented to Japan by England—who were then building for Argentina. These plans, which are quite "*confidential*" and were submitted to me by express permission of the President of the Argentine Republic, were sent me by Amaldo. As the ships may interest you, I send you the Atlas, for *your personal* use. I think the ships a perfect type of "Ironclad Cruizer" because they manage to get much into a small tonnage "*multum in parvo*." They cost 15 Mill. francs each, which is not much. May your men not have to fight against them; it is indeed a great pity you did not buy them. The paper cutting shows you what a certain people call neutrality.

Best wishes for a year of happiness and Peace and in the hopes of meeting you in it and with warmest love to Alix

Ever yours most affectionally,

WILLY.

P.S.—Forgive me if I trouble you so often with

telegrams, but at Wolfsgarten you kindly said that you were thankful for any news worth while which I was able to communicate to you; of course I *rely on your secrecy*, as they are only for you.

Admiral of Atlantic.

CHAPTER VIII

A BLACKMAILING LETTER

On the day after the declaration of war by the Mikado against Russia the Kaiser writes to the Tsar a letter of sympathy on the naval defeat, but he congratulates him on having a good conscience which, according to the Kaiser, permits a man "to march to the fray without knapsack or impediments."

In the following month the Kaiser is impatient to get at the benefits which he expected from the war which he did so much to engineer. He sends the Tsar what amounts to a blackmailing letter demanding the speedy conclusion of the famous Treaty of Commerce which was to place Russia economically at the mercy of Germany. The threat had its effect, and the Treaty was signed on July 28th, 1904.

In this instalment of the correspondence King Edward (Uncle Bertie) is mentioned for the first time in connection with a proposal for mediation between the two belligerents. As might be expected, the Kaiser is strongly opposed to any such peace move, for an early cessation of the war would not have suited his plans. He also warns the Tsar

about Anglo-French co-operation, and emphatically declares that if the French had helped Russia he would not have budged a finger to harm them, "for that would have been most illogical on the part of the author of the picture 'Yellow Peril.'"

An amusing paragraph deals with the Kaiser's request that his brother-in-law Prince Frederick Leopold of Prussia should accompany the Russian troops as "spectator to learn the art of war." Subsequent letters will show that the Tsar was not specially anxious to have this distinguished emissary with his troops.

XXXII.

Berlin, 11/II, 1904.

Dearest Nicky,

The answer to your kind letter of congratulation for my birthday¹ which made me so happy, was already begun, when the events occurred which led to the war between you and Japan.² I thought it better to wait for some sort of communication from you, in case I should be able to answer you. The outbreak of hostilities³

¹ The Kaiser was born on January 27th, 1859.

² Japan had formally declared war the day before this letter was written.

³ On February 8th, 1904, the Japanese torpedoed the battleships *Retvisan* and *Tsarevitch* and the cruiser *Pallada* lying off Port Arthur. At this time the German Press began to speculate as to the effect that the Wiesbaden interview would have on Russo-German relations in reference to the war with Japan. The Berlin Correspondent of the *Morning Post* telegraphed on February 11th, 1904: "If the *Lokal-anzeiger* is correctly informed, the Emperor of Russia and

has had sad consequences for your brave Navy, which have deeply moved me! How could it be otherwise, seeing that I am a Russian Admiral and proud of this rank too! Evidently the serious events show that the warning news I could send you through my ciphers were absolutely correct, and that since long the Japanese Government were in bitter earnest and decided to have war. Part of the ships at Port Arthur are known to me by my inspections, and also their officers and crew, and my heart is full of sympathy for the poor families stricken by the loss of many number.

I can well imagine how sore at heart you must feel that all your pains to secure peace were of no avail. But on the other hand this gives you a good conscience and a clear one too, which allows a man—as I often say—to march to the fray without knopsack or impediments. It seems that Heaven—on whose help and will we both rely—has willed that it should be so! Then you must look upon the events in the light of a *Trial*

Count Lamsdorff, when they met the Emperor William and Count von Bülow at Wiesbaden last autumn, preferred the request that in the event of war in the Far East Germany would guarantee to protect the Russian rear from attack or menace. This request, the journal says, was probably described by the German Government as superfluous owing to the absence of any reason why Germany should attempt to embarrass her neighbour during the progress of the war with Japan. In diplomatic circles a strong belief prevails that the outcome of the Wiesbaden meeting was the renewal of the Rückversicherungsvertrag (Reinsurance Treaty), which was allowed to lapse after the dismissal of Bismarck.”

for yourself and your country, which is to enable you and them to show and develop all the great qualities which are dormant in the Russians, which they already once proved in the great times of the first years of the 19th century!

It is my wish that—subject to your kind approval—if possible a Prince of my house should accompany your troops as spectator to learn the art of war. I would choose the Prince Fr. Leopold,¹ my brother-in-law, who is burning to go and speaks Russian. Perhaps you will kindly let me know whether my application can be granted.

You may rest assured that day and night my thoughts are occupied with you all! I send this letter through Schenck²—*your* Colonel—who is to

¹ Frederick Leopold, Prince of Prussia, the Kaiser's cousin, married Princess Louise Sophie of Schleswig-Holstein, the Kaiserin's sister. He was not famous for the sharpness of his wit, and actually hoisted the red flag on his palace at Potsdam when the revolution broke out.

² After the Russian reverse at Port Arthur the Kaiser sent a telegram of sympathy to the Tsar. The Berlin Correspondent of the *Morning Post* telegraphed on February 14th, 1904: "The Emperor William has supplemented his telegram by an autograph letter, which Col. von Schenck has presented to the Emperor of Russia. Col. von Schenck arrived in St. Petersburg yesterday for the purpose of handing to his Majesty the helmet of the Alexander Regiment of Prussian Grenadier Guards of which he is Chief." In connection with the Wiesbaden interview the correspondent states that several weeks after it had taken place the Kaiser informed the President of the Reichstag, Count von Ballestrem, that he had succeeded in establishing good neighbourly relations with Russia, and a few hours afterwards the Count alluded to Russia in the Reichstag as "an allied and friendly Power."

offer you the "Grenadier Cap" which the Alexander Regiment begs you to accept. I pray Heaven may shield and protect you and all your family through coming times. Warmest love to Alix and your mother from

Ever your most devoted friend
and cousin

WILLY.

The news I gave you a month ago concerning the sale of arms to China-Yuan-shi-kai from Japan is confirmed.¹ I managed to get a copy of the contract signed last October with the Firm of Okwa and Comp. in Japan.

1) 14,000 new Jap. Inftry Rifles (Meyji) with cartridge boxes etc. 22 taels each and 7 mill cartridges to be delivered at Tientsin April next.

2) 48 (Arisakha) field guns 7,5 at 5668 yen each

12 (Arisakha) mountain guns 7,5 cm. 1710 yen each

48 ammunition carts at 8 yen

200 shell, 200 shrapnel per gun at 10 yen

at 10 yen at 8 yen

The raw steel material is being produced in France (Creusot)—your Ally!—and to be finished

¹ A Petrograd telegram dated February 17th, 1904, published in the *Morning Post*, states that Yuan-shi-kai had resolved on a vigorous policy intended to defend the Liao frontier. "The tract of Chinese territory west of Liao which Yuan-shi-kai is thus credited with the desire of recovering from the grip of Russia is of large extent, and in the space between Liao and the Great Wall is to be found that Shan-hai-kwan and New-chwang railway with which Great Britain is so greatly concerned."

in Japan. To be delivered at Tientsin in May next. The Vice Roy of Nanking has ordered from the same firm in September, 1903, 200000 chests of Ammunition and Knapsacks for 70000 Men.

XXXIII.

Gaeta 29/III 1904

Dearest Nicky,

You will I am sure be interested in the cruise of mine in the Mediterranean.¹ Our voyage on the big Lloyd Steamer *König Albert* was most successful. We always had smooth water; even the Bay of Biscay behaved like the lake at Petershof. When we had some breeze or sea it was direct from aft. The big ship—she displaced between 15000–16000 Tons, was most comfortable without any motion, no vibration from the engines, was very well kept, and splendidly handled by her first rate Captain. The kitchen was excellent, the company very merry. What a

¹ The Kaiser left Bremerhaven in the *König Albert* on March 12th. He met the King of Spain at Vigo and arrived at Gibraltar on March 18th. He was entertained by Sir George White, the Governor, and by Lord Charles Beresford on board his flagship. He is said to have remarked when visiting the signal station on the Rock: "It has quite reached my expectation. It is grand, like everything British. I am not surprised at Gibraltar's being impregnable." He reached Naples on March 24th and there transhipped to the *Hohenzollern*. He met the King of Italy on March 26th.

pity you could not be there, how you would have enjoyed it all!

The Spanish coast is very fine but without vegetation. Vigo, a grand bay with room for all the fleets of the world. British fleets visit there every month; Henry was there last year with our Squadron. The Straits are imposing, but Gibraltar is simply overwhelming! It is the grandest thing I ever saw. Words are utterly inadequate to give the slightest idea of what it is. Grand in its nature and by the military Power, that is stored on and around this mighty Rock. In military circles I found much interest in the war but no preparations for it and no animosity against Russia. Port Mahon is a quiet and the cleanest Spanish town, with a pretty land-locked harbour. Something like Malta en miniature. Naples is too lovely and bewitching; summer climate, lots of flowers carnations especially, orange trees full of oranges! The King was well and much interested with the war which he is accurately studying. He mentioned that he had news of the mobilisation of the Turkestan and Caucasian Troops, who were already moving. I said I thought it most unlikely, and that I had never heard a word about it. I quieted him about the Balkans, which always have, it seems, a great attraction for him and said that nothing would happen there. The great Empires being resolved not to stand any nonsense from anybody.

By the by I see from the papers, that our

Treaty of Commerce seems to have come to a deadlock. I fancy the Geheim-Räthe and Tschinowniks¹ are gone off to a sweet slumber, after having spoiled a lot of ink, more than is good in fact. I would give anything to see it, what a lark it would be if you suddenly were to thump your Imperial fist on the "Table of green cloth" and give the lazy ones a jump! After all one cannot wait for ever considering the many months that have already been wasted. A promise of a nice pic-nic in Siberia will I am sure do wonders. Perhaps it would tend to quicken the pace of affairs if you were to send some person of importance to Berlin straight to Bülow to finish the game off with him personally; a man of first rate capacity and well versed, in such matters; that would do much good.

To-morrow we leave for Sicily-Messina—where we shall spend Easter week. Good bye dearest Nicky. God bless you and be with you through all the important times, you know how my thoughts are now with you.

Best love to Alix from your affectionate
cousin and friend

WILLY.

XXXIV.

Berlin, 6/VI, 1904.

Dearest Nicky,

Your kind letter which Kroupensky delivered to me two days ago has greatly touched me. In

¹ Chinovnik, a civil servant.

these days which are of course trying to you, your army and the country, it is doubly kind of you to give up so much time to me, but on the other hand it being so, I felt the more proud as I may infer from this fact that you count upon me as your *real friend* as you rightly express it. So it is! And I can assure you that nobody follows all the phases of the war with greater interest and assiduity than I do.

Your remark about Kouropatkin¹ was a perfect revelation to me!—I am most astonished of his shortsightedness in not implicitly obeying your commands. He ought all the more to have followed your counsels, as you had been to Japan yourself, and therefore were a much more competent judge of the Japs than him. Your warnings were quite right and have been fully borne out by the facts. I only hope to goodness

¹ At this time the advance of the Japanese on Port Arthur was reported to have greatly increased the dissension between Admiral Alexeieff and General Kuropatkin. The Admiral insisted that Port Arthur must be saved as a base for the fleet. Kuropatkin, on the other hand, declared that he had not enough men for a forward movement, and, consequently, he must leave Port Arthur to defend itself. The dispute between them was said to have been settled by a Council of War over which the Emperor presided, and Kuropatkin was told that he must try to save Port Arthur, provided that he acted with the utmost caution. According to a Paris telegram, the Tsar received on the day after the Kaiser's letter was written a mysterious telegram from General Kuropatkin containing one word that signified "It is done." There was said to be much speculation in Petrograd as to the meaning of this laconic despatch.

the General wont jeopardise the final success of your Forces by rashly exposing them to an "échec" before the whole of his reserves have joined him, which are as I believe still partly on the way. The old proverb of Napoleon I still hold good *la victoire est avec les gros Bataillons*; one can never be too strong for the battle; especially respecting the artillery: an absolute superiority must undoubtedly be established to ensure victory.

I had an interesting conversation about the war with the French milit.-Attaché,¹ who, on my remarks that I thought it most astonishing that the French as your "Allies" did not send their Fleet down to keep Port Arthur open till your Baltic Fleet had arrived, answered that it was true, but that they had to reckon with other Powers. After many hints and allusions I found out—what I always feared—that the Anglo-French agreement had the one main effect, viz. : to stop the French from helping you! *Il va sans dire*, that if France had been under the obligation of helping you with her Fleet or Army I would of course not have budged a finger to harm her; for that would have been most illogical on the part of the Author of the Picture "Yellow Peril"!

I am sure England will by times renew her efforts to make proposals to you about mediation

¹ The Marquis de Laguiche, Chef d'escadron d'Artillerie.

—it is in fact the special mission of Harding¹ as I know—, though you have already so strongly repudiated it, and which is most presuming in the extreme on her part, seeing that the war has only just begun—she is afraid for her money, and wants to get Thibet cheaply—I shall certainly try to dissuade Uncle Bertie² as soon as I meet him from harrassing you with any more such proposals. Should in the course of events mediation seem advisable to *you*, it is clear that the first wish for it must come from *you*, and you may be sure that I shall also always be at your disposal! I may compliment you on the bravery and gallantry of your soldiers and sailors who deserve all praise and who have fought very well!

I have thought over your suggestion about the Com. Treaty³ and talked the matter over with

¹ Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, gave a banquet in Petrograd on June 2nd in honour of Sir Charles Hardinge (now Viscount Hardinge), the British Ambassador.

² The meeting between King Edward and the Kaiser took place at Kiel on June 26th, 1904.

³ Witte arrived at Norderney to confer with Bülow on the Commercial Treaty on July 12th, and the Treaty was signed on July 28th, 1904. The Berlin Correspondent of the *Morning Post*, telegraphing on July 31st, 1904, said: "For Count von Bülow the conclusion of the Treaty constitutes a great personal triumph, which he owes mainly to the Far Eastern war." The Vienna Correspondent of the same paper, telegraphing on the same day, said: "It is believed that Germany took advantage of Russia's embarrassing position to barter diplomatic and financial support against economic concessions."

the Chancellor. We have no special interest respecting the place where the negotiations should be concluded, but as you kindly offer to send Witte over here, we will welcome his arrival, and the sooner you invest him with your powers to negotiate the better for our two Countries.

I have selected major Count Lamsdorf¹ my personal aide-de-camp, as milit. Attache. He is instructed by me to consider himself as attached to *your person solely*, as it was in the days of Nicolai I and Alexander II. He is only responsible in his reports to me personally and is forbidden once and for all to communicate with anybody else either Gen. Staff, or Foreign Office, or Chancellor. So you may entrust him with any message, enquiry, letter etc. for me and make use of him in every respect as a direct link between us two. Should you like to send me one of your suite who enjoys your full confidence, I will receive him with pleasure, for I think it highly necessary during these grave events, that you should be able to quickly communicate with me "*le cas échéant*," without the lumbering and indiscreet apparatus of Chancelleries, Embassies etc.

I wonder what I am going to hear from Uncle Bertie at Kiel, at all events I shall keep you

¹ The Kaiser's Aide-de-Camp, not to be confused with the Russian Foreign Minister. The Kaiser is starting again that secret diplomacy with the Tsar which so much annoyed Bismarck when General von Werder was attached to the person of Alexander II.

informed. Now good bye dearest Nicky best love to Alix and your Mama and God protect you all, that is the sincerest wish of

Ever Your
most affectionate friend and cousin

WILLY.

CHAPTER IX

THE SECRET TREATY

Letter No. XXXVII. throws fresh light on the famous Secret Russo-German Treaty which was signed by the two Emperors at Björko on July 24th, 1905. The main facts concerning this Treaty are dealt with in the general introduction to this volume. Earlier information concerning the Treaty appeared in telegrams published by the New York Herald in September of 1917 and they are given below. The Treaty, of course, was really incompatible with the Franco-Russian alliance and explains the eagerness of the Kaiser to complete it before its contents were revealed to France.

The Russian statesman Count Witte, who died in March, 1915, claimed that the Treaty was annulled at his instigation. The Treaty was not countersigned by the Russian Foreign Minister, but only by Admiral Birileff, Minister of Marine, who is said to have admitted that he signed at the Tsar's request without any idea of the purport of the document laid before him, and it is obvious that no responsible member of the Russian Foreign Office could have countenanced it.

Letter No. XXXVII. shows that the Kaiser is

becoming alarmed over the Franco-British rapprochement which received the approval of the French Chamber on November 12th, 1904.

In letter No. XXXVI. it will be seen that the Kaiser is urging the Tsar to send out to the Far East not only the Baltic Fleet but also the Black Sea Fleet, despite England, though he cautions the Tsar that the British Press "may fume and rage and their squadrons steam about a little."

The Tsarevitch was born on July 30th, 1904, and the Kaiser, in thanking the Tsar for asking him to be godfather to the little boy, lays down a number of maxims for his education.

XXXV.

Schloss Wilhelmshöhe, 19/VIII, 1904.

Dearest Nicky,

What a very kind thought it was of yours to ask me to be Godfather to your little boy! You can well imagine what our joy was when we read your telegram announcing his birth! "Was lange währt wird gut" (the good long looked for comes at last) says an old German proverb, so may it be with this little dear one! May he grow to be a brave soldier and a wise and powerful statesman; and may God's blessings always rest on him and preserve him from all harm of body and soul. May he always be as a ray of sunshine to you both during your life as he is now in the time of trial! Henry is the bearer of these lines and of my sincerest and heartfelt wishes for you, Alix, and the boy! Accompanied by the gift of

a Goblet for my little Godchild which he will I hope begin to use when he thinks that a man's thirst cannot for ever be quenched by milk only ! Perhaps he may then find out for himself one day that "*Ein gut Glas Brantewein soll Mitternachts nicht schädlich sein*" (A good glass of brandy will do one no harm at midnight) is not only a "truism," but that often "*Im Wein ist Wahrheit nur allein*" (*in vino veritas*) as the butler sings in "Undine"¹ to be wound up by the classical word of our great Reformer Dr. Martin Luther : "*Wer nicht liebt Wein, Weib und Gesang, der bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang*" (Who loves not women, wine, and song remains a fool his whole life long). These would be the maxims I would try to see my Godchild educated up to ! There is great sense in them and nothing can be said against them !

The course of the war² has been most trying to your army and navy and I deeply grieve for the loss of so many brave officers and men who fell or were drowned in doing their duty, loyally fulfilling the oath they swore to their Emperor. May the reinforcements which are being sent out increase the numbers and powers of your army to such an extent that the absolute supremacy may be established also in numbers. As far as I could make out Kouropatkine has 180,000 men

¹ One of the most charming of German Märchen (fairy-tales), by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, 1777-1843.

² At this time the Japanese were steadily drawing in on Port Arthur, which surrendered January 6th, 1905.

in the field, whereas the Japs muster about 250-280,000. This seems a disparity still and makes your valiant General's task a very heavy one. Should your battleships in making their last dash from Port Arthur, not be able to reach Wladiwostock on account of injuries received in the fight, their best chance is to try for Tsingtau, where they will be well looked after till the end of the war, instead of being blown up or sunk; just as well as we will take care of *Zesarewitch*¹ and the Torpedoboats. May next year bring better luck when the army prepared and formed in full strength will be able to tackle their enemy with better chance as there is for the moment; for it seems to me that Kouropatkine is still in danger of being cut off from his retreat, which he will have to fight for in the direction of Mukden²; God grant he may get through unscathed. The old saying of Napoleon I. still holds true "*la victoire est avec les gros bataillons.*"

There is no doubt to me you will and must win in the long run, but it will cost both money and many men; as the enemy is brave and well led and can only be beaten by overwhelming numbers and time and patience. Of course the operations of the field army will be easier and will give better

¹ On the night of August 10th, 1904, the Russian battleship *Tsarevitch*, the cruiser *Novik*, and three destroyers broke their way through the Japanese fleet and escaped from Port Arthur to Tsin-Tao, where they were interned.

² The Russians were defeated at Mukden in the battle which lasted from February 19th to March 12th, 1905.

results, as soon as the Baltic fleet¹ will have arrived on the scene, and forced the Jap Fleet back into their ports, thus restituting the *command of the sea* to you, now lost by the inefficiency of the Admirals in command of the Naval Forces at Port Arthur. The *command of the sea* is an absolutely necessary equivalent to the final success of the land campaign of the army. As it deprives the enemy of his base supports, reinforcements, etc., which he can now use freely for the pouring in of reserves, ammunitions, commissariat, evacuation of wounded, etc.

When the war broke out in February I worked out a plan of Mobilisation² on my own account founded upon the number of Jap Divisions of 1st line. These being 10-12 Div, it gives 20 Russ. Div. to reach (?) absolute supremacy over them that means 10 army corps, of these 4 Siberian corps may be deducted as being on the spot forming the Manchourian Army, it leaves 6 corps to be sent from Russia. They would be formed in 2 armies of 3 corps each served by a

¹ It sailed in October, 1904.

² War was declared on February 10th, 1904. Russia had then some 150,000 troops east of Lake Baikal. The mobilised Japanese Army numbered 520,000 men. Russia's problem was not to say how many army corps she would require to beat the Japanese, but to carry eastward enough troops to hold their own. The Russian garrisons in the Far East reduced the field army to 57,000 men. The Kaiser's amateur strategy was of very little utility to his friend and cousin, whose real difficulty lay in the length and inferiority of his communications with the Far East. The Kaiser had helped to push Russia into the war two years too soon.

cavalry corps of 8 brigades with 4 mounted batteries per *army*. That was what I expected would be sent out and what would be sufficient to win with, Leaving the Manchourian Army as a sort of advanced Guard to mask the arrival of the Russian Corps at their base and their formation and dislocation as an Army. I did not venture to write you my ideas as it is not my business to meddle with your affairs and I was afraid of your telling me to mind my own business, as you know better what Russia requires. But at this moment the first stage of the campaign being practically over I thought it might be of interest to you.

With best love to Alix and the "sun-ray,"¹ I remain Ever Your most devoted and affectionate friend and cousin,

WILLY
A. of A.

XXXVI.

Hubertushöhe, 10/X, 1904.

Dearest Nicky

In order not to lose time I at once telegraphed to you after having seen Shebeko.² I am much

¹ Presumably the little Tsarevitch.

² Colonel Shebeko was appointed Russian Military Attaché in Berlin in December, 1901. At the time of this letter he was appointed personal Aide-de-Camp to the Kaiser in the same way as Count Lamsdorff was appointed the Kaiser's

touched by all the kind messages you sent me through him, and I see by them that your faith in my loyalty is unshaken. It will indeed simplify matters vastly, now that Alexejev¹ has been recalled. One General who has the absolute command and control of all the troops in Manchouria will I am sure answer better to all the requirements of the war. Kouropatkine is, it seems, popular with his troops, and they place full faith in him; that is the point the most vital for final success.

Shebeko informed me of your intention to send the Black Sea Fleet out also in conjunction with the Baltic Fleet, and asked me to express my opinion about this plan.² I confess that long since I have been expecting this plan to be executed. It is a sound military idea and will ensure victory. As to the best manner of proceeding, I have, after ripely maturing the question and after having taken information, come to the following conclusion. The best plan would be to silently and quietly prepare the Fleet for its destination, not to breath a word about your intention to anybody and any other Power.

representative attached to the Tsar's person. The Kaiser telegraphed to the Tsar on September 25th, 1904: " 'Hallah' Shebecko just brought your letter when I was finishing you telegram."

¹ Recalled October 25th, 1904.

² The Kaiser had no objection to seeing Russian naval power weakened, and he would have been well content if the Black Sea Fleet had followed the Baltic Fleet to its doom.

Then at the moment you think right, calmly and proudly steam through the Dardanells. The Sultan—as we both know for certain—will not offer the shadow of resistance, and once you are out, we all shall be *vis à vis* of a “*fait accompli*,” which we all shall quietly accept. I have not the slightest doubt that England will accept it too though the Press may fume and rage and their Squadrons steam about a little as they often do in the Mediterranean. But they wont stir in earnest when they see that the rest of the Powers remain quiet. The main point is, that it must happen quite suddenly and unawares and take the whole world by surprise, without letting the secret out beforehand.

Here everything shall be kept absolutely mute.

With your approval I shall sign an order appointing Lamsdorf to your suite attached to your person and you will kindly do the same with Shebeko. Best love to Alix. Ever yours
affate,

WILLY.

XXXVII.

Neues Palais, 30/X, 1904.

My Dear Nicky

Your kind telegram¹ has given me the pleasure to feel that I was able to be of some use to you in a serious moment. I have at once communi-

¹ No doubt the telegram dated October 28th published below.

cated with the Chancellor¹ and we both have *secretly*—without informing any other person—drawn up the 3 Articles of the Treaty you wished. Be it as you say. Let us stand together. Of course the alliance would be purely defensive, exclusively directed against European aggressor or aggressors, in the form of a mutual fire insurance² company against incendiarism. It is very essential that Amerika should not feel threatened by our agreement. Roosevelt, as I know, owing to the innate American dislike to all coloured races, has no special partiality for Japan although England does her utmost to work upon American feeling in favour of the Japanese. Besides the Americans have a clear perception of the indisputable fact that a powerful Japanese Empire is a lasting danger to the American Philippines.

As for France³ we both know that the Radicals and antichristian parties, which for the moment are the stronger ones, incline towards England, old Crimean traditions, but are opposed to war, because a victorious General would mean certain destruction to this Republic of miserable civilians. The nationalist or clerical party dislikes England and has sympathies for Russia, but does not dream of throwing in its lot with Russia in the present war. Between these two parties the

¹ Twice in this letter the Kaiser lays stress on the fact that the Treaty draft was drawn up by Bülow and himself.

² An echo of the old Bismarckian Reinsurance treaty.

³ The Dreyfusard and Anti-clerical party was in power at the time this letter was written.

Republican Government will remain neutral and do nothing, England counts upon this neutrality and upon the consequent isolation of Russia. I positively know that as far back as December last the French Minister of Finance Rouvier¹ from his own accord told the Financial Agent of another Power, that on no account whatever would France join you in a Russo-Japanese war, even if England should take sides with Japan.

To make these Republicans doubly sure, England has handed Marocco over to France.² The absolute certainty that France intends to remain neutral and even to lend her diplomatic support to *England* is the motive which gives English policy its present unwonted brutal assurance. This unheard of state of things will change for the better as soon as France finds herself face to face with the necessity of choosing sides and openly declaring herself for Petersburg or London. As I said before the Radicals who gravitate to England abhor war and militarism whereas the Nationalists while not objecting to war itself, wont fight for England nor against Russia. Thus it evidently lies in the interest of

¹ Maurice Rouvier, who was Minister of Finance 1902-1905. He became Premier January 25th, 1905, with M. Delcassé as Foreign Minister. He was still Prime Minister when the Moroccan crisis arose, and M. Delcassé resigned as a result of German threats.

² The Anglo-French agreement of April 8th, 1904, contained a *déclaration* in which France recognised British predominance in Egypt and Great Britain recognised French influence in Morocco.

both parties to bring pressure to bear on and warn England to keep the peace. If you and I stand shoulder to shoulder the main result will be that *France must openly and formally join us both* thereby at last fulfilling her treaty obligations towards Russia which are of highest value to us, especially with respect to her fine harbours and good fleet, which would thereby be at our disposal too. This you may rest assured will put an end to made up grievances about so called breaches of neutrality. This consummation once reached I expect to be able to maintain Peace and you will be left a free and undisturbed hand to deal with Japan.

May I add that I sincerely admire your masterful political instinct which caused you to refer the North Sea incident to the Hague Tribunal.¹ For just this systematically distorted incident has been used by the French Radicals, Clemenceau and all the rest of the tag-rag and bobtail as a further argument against the necessity of France's fulfilling her treaty obligations towards Russia. Of course before we can take any steps in this question and approach France that tiresome North Sea incident must first have been brought to a close. For me I am informed Delcassé and Cambon have already adopted the British

¹ The Tsar's proposal that the dispute arising out of the Dogger Bank outrage should be submitted to an international commission of inquiry on the basis of the Hague Convention was accepted by the British Government on October 28th, 1904. In this dispute French public opinion sided to a great extent with the British point of view.

view of this incident and accordingly *fixed* the attitude of the French Government in a *friendly* way for *England*. Should we therefore on this question bring pressure to bear on France, she would no doubt choose the *British* side, just what we dont want her to do. “ *Il faut que l'incident de la Mer Noire soit clos* ” first, then only after that our action may begin.

I herewith enclose the draft of the Articles of the Treaty as wished, may it meet with your approval, nobody knows anything about it, not even my foreign office; the work was done by Bülow and me personally. “ *Möge Gottes Segen ruhen auf dem Vorhaben der beiden hohen Herrscher, und die mächtige 3-fache Gruppe Russland, Deutschland, Frankreich für immer Europa den Frieden bewahren helfen, das walte Gott.* ” (May God's blessing rest on the purpose of the two high rulers, and please God may the mighty triple group, Russia, Germany, and France help Europe to maintain peace for ever.) Those were his words when we had finished.

I send to Suwalki¹ in order to salute you

¹ The Tsar left Petrograd on November 8th, 1904, on a tour of military inspection to the Western frontier of Russia. General von der Goltz and Herr von Moltke, Chief President of East Prussia, left Berlin for Suwalki on November 9th, and lunched with the Tsar on the Imperial train at Suwalki on November 10th. The rumours prevalent in Berlin at this time of another meeting between the Tsar and Kaiser are suggestive in view of the light thrown upon the relations of the two Emperors by the Kaiser's letter and the draft treaties.

on nearing our frontier General der Infanterie v.d. Goltz and Oberpräsident von Ostpreussen von Moltke. The former commands the 1 army corps, after having been chief of our Engineering corps; which post he filled after his return from Turkey, where he spent many years in the fruitless attempts at reorganisation. The latter is Governor of Eastern Prussia, a nephew of the old Field Marshal and brother of my Gen. Adjutant, who commanded your Grenadiers and was often kindly received by you, when he came in special mission.

With best love to Alix I remain Ever your
affate cousin and friend

WILLY

TREATY DRAFTS.

The text of two drafts of the proposed treaty is given below. The first draft, numbered XXXVIII. is a later revised version of that numbered XXXIX. and the meaning of the differences in wording is discussed in the next letter of the Kaiser.

XXXVIII.

PROJET.

Leurs Majestés les Empereurs de toutes les Russies et d'Allemagne afin d'assurer le maintien de la paix en Europe ont arrêté les articles suivants d'un traité d'alliance défensive.

ARTICLE I.

Au cas où l'un des deux Empires serait attaqué par une Puissance Européenne, son allié l'aidera de toutes ses forces de terre et de mer. Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les

Russies fera les démarches nécessaires pour initier la France à cet accord et l'engager à s'y associer comme Alliée.

ARTICLE II.

Les hautes parties contractantes s'engagent à ne conclure de paix séparée avec aucun adversaire commun.

ARTICLE III.

Le présent Traité restera en vigueur tant qu'il ne sera pas dénoncé une Année à l'avance.

ARTICLE SECRET.

Les hautes parties contractantes se sont convenues de faire cause commune dans le cas où des actes accomplis par une d'elles pendant la guerre (actuelle ?) tels que la livraison de charbon à un belligérant, donneraient lieu par la suite à des réclamations d'une tierce Puissance comme prétendues violations du droit des neutres.

Il résulte des termes du premier alinéa de l'article I que l'Allemagne ne s'associera à aucune action quelle qu'elle soit qui pourrait impliquer des tendances hostiles à la Russie.

XXXIX.

DRAFT OF TREATY.

Leurs Majestés l'Empereur de Toutes les Russies et l'Empereur d'Allemagne afin de localiser autant que faire se peut la Guerre Russo-Japonaise ont arrêté les Articles suivants d'un traité d'Alliance défensive.

ARTICLE I.

Au cas où l'un des deux Empires serait attaqué par une Puissance européenne son Allié l'aidera de Toutes ses forces de terre et de mer. Les deux Alliés, le cas échéant, feront également cause commune afin de rappeler à la France les obligations qu'elle a assumées aux termes du traité d'Alliance Franco-Russe.

ARTICLE II.

Les deux hautes parties contractantes s'engagent à ne conclure de paix séparée avec aucun adversaire commun.

ARTICLE III.

L'engagement de s'entraidier est valable également pour le cas où des actes accomplis par l'une des deux hautes parties contractantes pendant la Guerre tels que la livraison de charbon à un belligérant donneraient lieu après la guerre à des réclamations d'une tierce Puissance comme prétendues violations du droit des neutres.

The following is a translation of the drafts given above :—

XXXVIII.

PROJECT.

Their Majesties the Emperors of All the Russias and Germany, in order to assure the maintenance of peace in Europe, have laid down the following articles of a treaty of defensive alliance :

ARTICLE I.

In case one of the two Empires should be attacked by a European Power its ally will help it with all its land and sea forces. His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias will take the necessary steps to inform France of this understanding, and to invite her to associate herself with it as an Ally.

ARTICLE II.

The high contracting parties undertake not to conclude any separate peace with any common adversary.

ARTICLE III.

The present treaty will remain in force so long as it shall not have been denounced a year beforehand.

SECRET ARTICLE.

The high contracting parties are agreed to make common cause in the case where acts committed by one of them during the (present ?) war, such as the delivery of coal to a belligerent, should give rise in consequence to complaints

by a third Power as to pretended violations of the rights of neutrals.

It follows from the terms of the first paragraph of Article I. that Germany will not associate itself with any action whatsoever which might imply hostile tendencies towards Russia.

XXXIX.

DRAFT OF TREATY.

Their Majesties the Emperor of All the Russias and the Emperor of Germany (*sic*), in order to localise as much as possible the Russo-Japanese War, have laid down the following Articles of a defensive Alliance :

ARTICLE I.

In the event of one of the two Empires being attacked by a European Power its Ally will help it with all its land and sea forces. The two Allies, in case of need, will also act in concert in order to remind France of the obligations she has assumed by the terms of the Franco-Russian Treaty of Alliance.

ARTICLE II.

The high contracting parties undertake not to conclude any separate peace with any common adversary.

ARTICLE III.

The undertaking to help one another also extends to the case where acts committed by one of the two high contracting parties during the war, such as the delivery of coal to a belligerent, should give rise after the war to complaints by a third Power as to pretended violations of the rights of neutrals.

IMPERIAL TELEGRAMS.

For a full understanding of the above letter and the draft treaties it is necessary to read the telegrams exchanged between the Kaiser and

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Tsar on October 27th and October 28th, 1904. They were first published in the *New York Herald* (Paris edition), September 3rd, 1917. The first telegram from the Kaiser to the Tsar, dated Berlin, October 27th, runs as follows :—

For some time the English Press has been threatening Germany that she must no account allow coals to be sent to the Baltic fleet, now on its way out. It is not impossible that the Japanese and British Governments may launch joint protests against our coaling your ships, coupled with a summons to stop further work. The result aimed at by such a threat of war would be the absolute immobility of your Fleet and its inability to proceed for want of fuel. This new danger would have to be faced in common by Russia and Germany together, who would both have to remind your ally France of the obligations she took over in the treaty of the dual alliance with you in the case of a *casus fœderis* arising.

It is out of the question that France on such invitation would try to shirk her implicit duty towards her ally. Though Delcassé is Anglophile and would be enraged he would be wise enough to understand that the British Fleet is utterly unable to save Paris. In this way a powerful combination of the three strongest Continental Powers would be formed, to attack which the Anglo-Saxon group would think twice.

Before acting you ought not to forget to order new ships, so as to be ready with some of them when the war is over. They will be excellent persuaders during the peace negotiations. Our private firms would be most glad to receive contracts.

The Tsar telegraphed from "St. Petersburg" on October 28th, 1904, as follows :—

Of course, you know the first details of the North Sea incident from our Admiral's telegram. Naturally it completely alters the situation. I have no words to express my indignation with England's conduct. I agree fully with

your complaints about England's behaviour concerning the coaling of our ships by German steamers. Whereas she understands the rules of keeping neutrality in her own fashion, it is certainly high time to put a stop to this. The only way, as you say, would be that Germany, Russia, and France should at once unite upon arrangements to abolish English and Japanese arrogance and insolence. Would you like to lay down and frame the outlines of such a Treaty? As soon as it is accepted by us France is bound to join her ally.

The Kaiser replied to the Tsar on October 30th, the day the above letter was written, by the following telegram :—

Neues Palais 30 Oct. 1904.

Best thanks for telegram. Have sent letter, including draft of treaty you wished for, off by Imperial fieldjaeger this evening. Heard from private source that Hull fishermen have already acknowledged that they have seen foreign steam craft among their boats, not belonging to their fishing fleet, which they knew not. So there has been foul play. I think the British Embassy in Petersburg must know this news, whereto are kept from the British public till now, for fear of "blamage."—WILLY.

From these telegrams and the letter it becomes clear that the Dogger Bank incident almost decided the Tsar to conclude an alliance with Germany. The Kaiser dwelt on the danger of Great Britain preventing the coaling of the Baltic Fleet by neutral Powers, and the Russian Emperor, relying on the report sent in by Admiral Rojdestvensky, asserting that his action in firing on the Hull trawlers was justified by the presence of enemy warships, called upon the Kaiser to frame the outlines of a treaty "to abolish

English and Japanese arrogance and insolence." These drafts remained a dead letter. They were specially framed with a view to the Russo-Japanese War and the coaling of the Baltic Fleet. The idea of an alliance with Germany, however, was not allowed to drop, and the Tsar eventually on July 24th, 1905, signed a treaty of alliance discussed in one of the Kaiser's letters to the Tsar. The text of this treaty, which was only to come into force after the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War, was as follows:—

Their Imperial Majesties the Emperor of All the Russias and the Emperor of Germany, with the object of maintaining peace in Europe, have agreed on the following points of a defensive alliance :

1. If any European State attacks one of the two Empires the allied party will employ all its naval and military forces to assist its ally.
2. The high contracting parties undertake not to conclude a separate peace with any common adversary.
3. The present treaty will come into force at the moment when peace is concluded between Russia and Japan. A year's notice must be given to terminate it.
4. As soon as this treaty comes into force Russia will take the necessary steps to make France acquainted with it, and will suggest to France that she should participate in it as an ally.

CHAPTER X

THE SECRET TREATY

(continued)

The Kaiser is again on the subject of the Secret Treaty. It is clear that the Tsar is worried about his obligations to France, and is in particular anxious to show the Treaty to the French Government. The Kaiser objects and the Tsar wavers. Then he hints darkly at terrible dangers if the Treaty becomes known and eventually almost delivers an ultimatum concerning the coaling of the Baltic Fleet. The Tsar still resists and there is apparently no further talk of the Treaty until the meeting at Björko in July, 1905.

The Kaiser is clearly disturbed at the restlessness of British public opinion, and suggests certain modifications in order to prevent "the irate Jingoës in England" from making it a casus belli. He is then anxious to emphasise the defensive character of the Alliance so as to prevent America joining England, "which on no account must be allowed." Finally, he suggests, as "an excellent expedient to cool British insolence and overbearing," Russian military demonstrations on the Perso-Afghan frontier.

XL.

Neues Palais, 17/XI, 1904.

Dearest Nicky,

Your kind letter shows once more that the localisation of the actual war and the avoidance of a European War are the guiding principle of our mutual exertions. I take the liberty of abusing of your kind permission in our mutual interest to propose two changes ; one is to modify my proposal, the other the final clause of yours.

It may be possible that the sentence "*Afin de localiser la guerre Russo-Japonaise*" if through the publication officially or by indiscretion secretly the contents of the treaty became known, could be interpreted by other Powers as meaning that the treaty was only valid *only* in case England went to war as Ally of Japan, i.e. directed as a menace of *provocative* meaning solely against her. In reality and practically it is so : but "*Toute vérité n'est pas bonne à dire.*" We now see the British Public opinion in a state of nervousness nearly bordering on lunacy, of which it has just given us all some delightful proofs.¹ It would in this mood look upon this treaty as a direct *provocation* and straightaway urge on the final catastrophe we both are trying to avoid or to postpone at least. Therefore I suggest a sentence used by yourself "*afin d'assurer le maintien de la Paix en Europe,*" which would answer perfectly to our purpose and can *on no account* be looked upon

¹ The Dogger Bank outrage had naturally aroused a storm of anger in the country.

as a *provocation*. We only think of ourselves and refrain from pointing with fingers at anybody (which besides is looked upon as a want of manners in society). Nobody—with a *clean conscience* n.b.—has any right to feel annoyed at such a treaty and it will be very difficult for the irate Jingoës in England to turn its conclusion into a “*casus belli*.”

This change in the wording of the treaty, to my belief, necessitates a certain limitation of time. Either a short one with an abrogation limit, at any moment of year, or if you like it better a longer term. The prolongation would in case—as I fervently hope—the treaty meets the wishes of and proves a boon to the two nations, go on quite by itself automatically. This can be arranged exactly as you like it.

The next change refers to the newly added final clause of the treaty. It must be borne in mind that should you for instance wish the treaty to remain unpublished, indiscretions are possible—walls have ears and diplomatists tongues that will wag—under such circumstances the meaning put upon this sentence would be that I had precisely bound myself to help you to defend the *Conquests* of Russia which would tend to immediately replace Article I. in a purely *aggressive* light. This would lead the whole political world to infer that we had—instead of concluding a Defensive Alliance—formed a sort of chartered Company limited for Annexation purposes, possibly involving secret clauses for the private

benefit of Germany. The general mistrust ensuing would gravely imperil our mutual Situation, because Amerika would immediately join England—which on no account must be allowed—acting under the suspicion that Russia and Germany were on the move for aggressive operations to further selfish ends. But it will just be the main task of Russian and German diplomatists to stop America joining England. Should the Treaty become known either by official publication or indiscretions, Bülow—in answering questions in Parliament—must be able to declare that no secret clauses exist able to harm the *defensive* nature of the treaty or assuring Germany—*au détriment des autres*—anything else beyond the help in the Defence of the Peace of Europe, if it were endangered by anybody else.

This is why I submit a different wording of the sentence. The ruling idea in it is the continuous polemic of the Russian Press in the last months against a Peace-Congress for mediation, like in 1878 of which your papers are afraid that it may be summoned together again—and signs there are that some Powers are already working in that direction, especially Paris and London—and which would do everything in its power to bring the victors and vanquished to one and the same level and try to rob the former of their conquests and advantages as in 1878.¹ Besides

¹ The following telegram from the Kaiser to the Tsar dated November 6th, 1904, explains the interpretation

this sentence in its new form excludes all possibilities once for all for Germany ever being a party to such a Peace Congress, and at the same time robs all evilwishers and critics of the opportunity to suggest that we have any goal in view but that of preserving Peace without provocation.

that the German Emperor suggested of all mediation proposals supported by the British Government :

“Lamsdorff leaves to-night with letter. My statement about India in last telegram are corroborated by the speech of Lord Selborne, who alluded to Afghanistan question. I hear from trustworthy private source that authorities in Tokio are getting anxious at the future outlook of the war. . . . A Japanese General went so far to say : ‘The soup we have cooked we must now eat up.’ Lansdowne has asked Hayashi to intimate to England the conditions upon which Japan would conclude peace. They were telegraphed from Tokio, but were so preposterous that even blustering Lansdowne thought them too strong, and urged Hayashi to tone them down. When they made a wry face and difficulties, Lansdowne added : ‘Of course, England will take good care that a mediæval Russia will be kept well out of Manchuria, Korea, &c., so that *de facto* Japan will get all she wants.’ That is the point the British have in their eye when they speak of friendship and friendly mediation. France, as I hear from Japan, is already informed of these plans, and, of course, a party to this arrangement, taking, as usual in the new ‘Entente Cordiale,’ the side of England. They are going to offer you a bit of Persia as compensation, of course, far from the shore of the Gulf—*Ca va sans dire*—which England means to annex for herself, fearing you might get access to the warm sea, which you must by right, as Persia is bound to fall under Russian control and government. This would give either a splendid commercial opening, which England wants to debar you from.—May God grant you full success, while I continue to watch everywhere for you. Best love to Alix.—WILLY.”

These are my two proposals I venture to submit to your kind approval, which I hope may be accorded to them, intending by them to avoid letting England take an active part in this war, and if possible to hinder America from joining her.

I dont know whether you think it necessary to communicate the secret Clause (III) to France ? It is quite as you like, but I believe that the other articles will retain her from turning aside. Delcassé¹ I am sure will immediately find out the Anti-Congress tendency in the sense, and considering that he has already opened negotiations between London and Paris and with other Powers for the summoning of a Peace Congress for Meditation, he will be placed in a certain difficulty having to suddenly break off his negotiations already "*entamées.*"

Doubtless the French would much prefer any other grouping of Powers to that of the *Alliance à trois* as in 1895, but the Russo-German Treaty once a *fact* our combined powers will enact a strong attraction on France, which you have already foreseen in your telegram of October 29th when you say "After the arrangement is accepted by us, France is bound to join." Of course it will be the work of your diplomacy to make the necessary arrangements with France, Germany

¹ The famous French Foreign Minister, who did so much to establish the Entente Cordiale. He resigned in 1905, owing to the attitude taken up by Germany in the Moroccan affair.

in the meantime remaining silently standing behind you. The Democratic Civilians and Freemasons Delcassé Combes¹ & Cie have as much to fear from victory as from rout, and the moment they are aware that France would be unable to remain neutral and under the necessity of choosing sides, they will do all within their power to restrain England from going to war.

Last not least an excellent expedient to cool British insolence and overbearing would be to make some military demonstrations on the Persio-Afghan frontier,² where the British thinks you powerless to appear with troops during this war; even should the forces at your disposal not suffice for a real attack of India itself they would do for Persia—which has no army—and a pressure on the Indian frontier from Persia will do wonders in England and have remarkably quieting influence on the hot headed Jingoës in London. For I am aware and informed that this is the only thing they are afraid of and that the fear of your entry into India from Turkestan and into Afghani-

¹ Leader of the Anti-Clerical party in France.

² In this connection a telegram sent by the Kaiser to the Tsar on November 2nd, 1904, has a certain significance :

“ From a reliable source in India I am secretly informed that expedition ‘ à la Thibet ’ is being quickly prepared for Afghanistan. It is meant to bring that country for once and all under British influence, if possible direct suzerainty. The expedition is to leave end of this month. The only not English European in Afghanistan service, the director of the arms manufactory of the Emir, a German gentleman, has been murdered, as ‘ préambule ’ to the action.—WILLY.”

stan from Persia was the real and only cause that the guns of Gibraltar and of the British Fleet remained silent 3 weeks ago!¹ The Indian frontier and Afghanistan are the only part of the Globe where the whole of her Battlefleets are of no avail to England and where their guns are powerless to meet the invader. India's loss is the death stroke to Great Britain!

This is how I hope that our treaty will fullfil its tasks to preserve the Peace of Europe. Should the revised draft and the motives submitted meet with your approval the signing can be done immediatly. I expect that Lambsdorff will receive your commands for the drawing up of formalities. God grant that we may have found the right way to hemm in the horrors of war and give his blessing to our plans.

Believe me dearest Nicky, with best love to Alix,

Ever your
most affate cousin and friend

WILLY

¹ Among the precautions taken by the British Government after the Dogger Bank outrage was the concentration of an overwhelming fleet at Gibraltar, ready to take such action as might be necessary when the Russian Fleet arrived in Mediterranean waters.

XLI.

Berlin, 7/XII, 1904.

Dearest Nicky,

The British Government, as you will have seen in the English press,¹ seems to think the actual moment opportune for an action against the provisioning of your Baltic Fleet with coal. Under pretext that it is its duty to maintain strictest neutrality it has *forbidden* the German vessels belonging or chartered by the Hamburg-American-line to leave British ports.² My fears—

¹ It was announced on December 3rd, 1904, that a German ship had been stopped under the Foreign Enlistment Act from coaling at Cardiff because its cargo was believed to be destined for the Russian Baltic Fleet. The *communiqué* added: "It is understood that the British and German Governments are conferring to prevent the coaling of the Russian Fleet by German ships."—*Morning Post*, December 5th, 1904.

² Light is thrown on the part played by the Hamburg-American Line in the coaling of the Russian Baltic Fleet by a telegram from Port Said published in the *Morning Post* on December 19th, 1904. It was announced that two British colliers were discharging coal for the Baltic Fleet at that port to the agent of the Hamburg-American Line. The following telegrams exchanged between the Tsar and the Kaiser are also to the point:

"Admiral Rojestvensky wired yesterday for the third time that two Hamburg-American Line coaling ships have not yet received orders from their company to follow further than Madagascar under German Flag. The agreement concerning money guarantees against war risk has been settled with the company through the Mendelssohn Bank, but the Hamburg-America Company fears to give orders

I wrote to you longer ago—that this would happen have at last come true, and it is now incumbent upon me to take early steps to fix the attitude Germany has to take up *vis à vis* of this action. It is far from my intention to hurry you in your answer to my last remarks about your proposal anent our defensive treaty. But you will I am sure be fully alive to the fact, that I must now have absolutely positive guarantees from you, whether you intend leaving me unaided or not in case England and Japan should declare war against me, on account of the Coaling of the Russian Fleet by Germany. Should you be unable to absolutely guarantee me, that in such a war you will loyally fight shoulder to shoulder with me, then I regret to assert to be under the necessity of immediately forbidding German steamers to continue to coal your fleet.

before getting instructions from the Chancellor. Would you kindly give the necessary permission, without which the further sailing of the Squadron becomes entirely impossible? —NICKY.”

The Kaiser replied :

Berlin, 2 (15) Fevrier, 1905 (12 o'cl., 55 m.).

“ I told you at the beginning of this coaling business that I should do nothing to prevent. I can give no instructions whatever with regard to it, because it is a private enterprise. The Hamburg-American Line knows the situation and must act on their own responsibility. From this point of view I have ordered now to let Ballin know once more by wire that as for myself and my Government he is at liberty to act as he thinks fit—of course, at his own risks.—WILLY.”

Alvensleben is under orders to at once elucidate the coaling question with Lambsdorff.¹

Best love to Alix,
Ever your most affate cousin and friend
WILLY.

XLII.²

Neues Palais, 21/XII, 1904.

Dearest Nicky

Sincerest thanks for your kind letter and two telegrams, as well as for your kind order regulating the coaling question, of course we are unable to-day to foresee whether the declaration given by your Government will prove sufficient to meet every kind of complication which may arise out of the present run of affairs. It is

¹ The Kaiser, seeing that his personal threats and flatteries are useless, abandons that secret diplomacy between himself and the Tsar which led him no further than the drafting of the Treaty. The coaling question is henceforth in the hands of the German Ambassador in Petrograd, and becomes a matter between the two Governments.

² In this letter the Kaiser at last makes it clear that he will never consent to the Tsar divulging to the French Government the proposed alliance between Germany and Russia before it is an accomplished fact. The Tsar evidently considered that this condition made the alliance impossible, and it is significant to note that on December 30th, 1904, a few days after the Kaiser's letter was written, there was signed in Petrograd an Anglo-Russian Commercial Agreement which was described semi-officially as "an advance in the relations between the two countries."

however not my intention to press any upon you any solution which might appear undesirable to you. We shall under all circumstances remain true and loyal friends. My opinion about the agreement is still the same; it is impossible to take France into our confidence *before* we two have come to a definite arrangement. Loubet and Delcassé are no doubt experienced statesmen. But they not being Princes or Emperors I am unable to place them—in a question of *confidence* like this one—on the same footing as you my equal, my cousin and friend.

Should you therefore think it imperative to acquaint the French Government with our negotiations *before* we have arrived at definite settlement, I consider it better for all parties concerned to continue in our present condition of mutual independence, and of the spontaneous promotion of eachothers ends as far as the situation will permit. I firmly trust and believe that the hopes of our being useful to eachother may be realized not only during the war, but also after it during the Peace negotiations, for our interests in the Far East are identical in more than one respect.

I wish you and Alix with all my heart a merry Xmas and a happy New Year, and may the Lords Blessing be on you all not forgetting the boy. With sincerest love to Alix believe me dearest Nicky

Ever your
most affate and devoted cousin and friend

WILLY

CHAPTER XI

FALL OF PORT ARTHUR

The Kaiser in letter No. XLIII. sends his consolations on the fall of Port Arthur, which created "a very great sensation." He again expresses the hope, in his persistent way, that in rebuilding the Russian Fleet the Tsar's advisers will not forget "our great firms at Stettin, Kiel etc." He reminds the Emperor Nicholas too that "the Japs have just ordered four Line of Battleships in England."

In letter No. XLV. the Kaiser makes his first reference to the revolutionary troubles in Russia—a subject in which, of course, he took a very natural interest—and he outlines briefly his suggestions for coping with the situation. His idea is to attach a body of men chosen from the local Zemstvos to the Imperial Council, over which the Emperor himself at times would preside, thus enabling the "Emperor and Father" to remain in touch with "simple folk." This plan is, it appears, "just like I did in 1890," when he posed as a workman's Emperor and summoned an International Congress to Berlin for the benefit of the German working classes.

The Kaiser must now regret the request made in

letter No XLIV. that the Tsar should send as successor to Count Osten-Sacken, the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, the late Count Izvolsky, who was later on to become one of the strongest supporters of the Triple Entente, particularly during his tenure of the post of Russian Ambassador in Paris.

XLIII.

Berlin, 2/I, 1905.

Dearest Nicky

Best thanks for your kind letter New Years cards which are well executed. The Cossack charge is most effective, one cannot help thinking what might have happened if at Liao-Yang¹ General Samsonoff² had ridden a charge like that with his 17,000 sabres & lances against the Japan left wing.

The news of the fall of Port Arthur received here yesterday evening created a very great sensation.³ We all here feel deepest sympathy for the valiant Generals & the brave diminishing band of heroes under their orders who strove to the

¹ August 24th to September 4th. The Japanese left, after heavy fighting in which General Samsonoff's cavalry took part, broke the Russian right, and captured Liao-Yang, the Russian military capital of Southern Manchuria, and a point of great strategic value.

² Commanded at the above battle the Siberian Cossack Division, the strength of which is estimated at nineteen squadrons, so that the 17,000 sabres and lances seem only to have existed in the Kaiser's imagination.

³ General Stoessel sent a *parlementaire* with an offer of surrender on January 1st, 1905. The Kaiser conferred the "Ordre pour le Mérite" on both General Nogi and General Stoessel.

utmost & last to fulfil their duty towards their Emperor & their country; their defence of Port Arthur will become proverbial for all ages, & be upheld as an example to be emulated as long as a soldier will exist, honour to them for ever! The imminence of the fall of the doomed fortress had for some time already set the diplomatical tongues wagging in the different capitals of the world; many & different were the rumours & news of armistices & ever peace arrangements which reached me from everywhere. It being rather difficult to discern truth from invention of phantasy.

I hope you wont fancy that I intrude upon your privacy, when I address myself to you to beg you to tell me what your plans for the future are, so that, if possible I may make myself useful to you, & be enabled to shape my course of my policy. The more so as Lambsdorff told Alvensleben the other day, "*que la France connait déjà nos conditions.*"¹ Now, I prefer being informed by yourself directly, instead in a round about way through other agencies, as I have firmly stood to you & your country from the first as your faithfull friend!

After a long spell of unusually warm & foggy weather which enabled us to ride up to Xmas nearly, a very heavy gale suddenly burst upon us

¹ The Kaiser's remark suggests that he is anxious to return to the secret diplomacy between Emperor and Emperor, that had been momentarily suspended when the secret alliance negotiations failed.

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followed by sharp frost & snow, & winter seems to have set in earnest this makes me think of the conditions of life through which the Armies in Manchuria have to go now, remaining stationary for so long time as the months gone by. I am so glad that you rewarded the bravery of my Regiment, which has greatly distinguished itself on the Sha-ho, by so many decorations, I hope they also got a good number of St. Georges Crosses.

Now that the programme for the renewal of your fleet¹ has been published I hope you wont forget to remind your authorities to remember our great firms at Stettin, Kiel etc. ; they will I am sure furnish fine specimens of line of battle ships.

I am so glad that Ernie has again become engaged & I will go to his wedding beginning of next month.²

I hope you will kindly accept the two vases for Xmas, which come from our Royal Porcelain Factory, they are a symbol of my warmest wishes for you & your family & country for the coming year in which God may preserve you all believe me ever your

most aff-ate cousin and friend

WILLY.

¹ Published in the *Morning Post* January 2nd, 1905. £160,000,000 was to be expended.

² After the dissolution of his marriage with Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Ernest Louis, Grand Duke of Hesse, was married to Princess Eleonore of Solms-Hohensolms-Lich on February 2nd, 1905.



I am glad to hear you are well
 and in no way be of any hindrance to
 your general as he is a great man, active
 and in some of the most of work that it does
 not matter if he goes to it where you
 whether you can prevent it or not
 with excuses for believe you with all these
 matters but they are better done in
 or best how to do it

Friend

Love your most aff. - cousin & friend

Willy

Feb 15/1861



Dear Sir

The widow of old Simon Antoine
 Ponswell, Simons Marie, is going to Ireland
 to beg for you approval of her late husband's
 will. Simon Antoine was not only a child
 & trusted servant of my deceased Grandfather
 as his Adjutant or Assistant General, but also
 a faithful & beloved personal friend to him
 as well as to my late beloved father & to me
 this morning & his very nature & work
 as his children's character & his own friends
 wherever he goes, & your Grandfather & father
 have both always blessed him. His
 wife is the intimate long-life friend of my
 late mother, & has been made acquainted by
 her husband for his wife. The whole interest
 of his children's family rests on the fact
 of your kind approval of the will of 1797

XLIV.

Berlin, 15/I, 1905.

Dearest Nicky,

The widow of old Prince Antoine Radziwill, Princess Marie,¹ is going to Petersburg to beg for your approval of her late husbands will. Prince Antoine was not only a cherished & trusted servant of my deceased grandfather as his Adjutant and Adjutant General, but also a faithful & beloved personal friend to him as well as to my late beloved father & to me. His winning ways & his gay nature as well as his chivalrous character won him friends wherever he was, & your Grandfather & father have both allways cherished him. His wife was the intimate long-life friend of my late mother, & has been made testatrix by her husband for his will. The whole future of her children & family rests on the fact of your kind approval of the will, & I venture to plead her cause to you & to beg that you will bestow your kindness on her, as she is very sad & broken down by her loss; this she feels the more as her eldest son is an hopeless idiot in an Asylum, so that she must look after her Grandchildren too.

Your Ambassador Osten-Sacken is in great anxiety on account of his poor old wife. She has had a very serious operation made in her

¹ Princess Marie Radziwill des marquis de Castellane was the widow of Prince Antoine Radziwill, who died in Berlin on December 16th, 1904. She had six grandchildren by the marriage of her eldest son with the Countess Branicka.

back—without having been able to use chloroform—& is unable to lie down but must spend her nights sitting in a chair & suffering terrible pain, so that considering her age of 84, her life is feared for. Poor old man, the suspense is very telling upon him, & I am afraid that should she die, he will not be able to work as well as formerly & perhaps think of retiring. Should a change once take place at your Embassy here, I would venture *quite privately*, to ask you to send Isvolsky here.¹ He is one of the best men in your foreign Service, and an intimate friend of long standing of Count Bülow's, who would be overpleased at having him here, as they formerly served together as diplomatists, & as he cherished Isvolsky much.

Lastly may I once more remind you of your kind promise, twice given, & twice put off, that my brother-in-law Fredric Leopold could be allowed to join your army.² The last time in July all was arranged & ready, when he was put

¹ M. A. P. Izvolsky was Russian Minister at Copenhagen 1902–1906, and in May, 1906, he succeeded Count Lamsdorf as Foreign Minister. In 1910 he became Ambassador in Paris, where he died on August 16th, 1919.

² Poor Prince Frederic Leopold had endless difficulties to face in his vain endeavour to reach the Russian front. In letter No. XXXII., written nearly a year before, he was described as “burning to go,” and the Kaiser stated that he spoke Russian. In the present letter we learn that this not very intelligent Prussian Prince had actually learnt Russian for the purpose of his mission, but he was still as far as ever from obtaining leave to join the Russian armies. As will be seen later, his troubles were not nearly at an end.

off, which placed him in a very difficult position *vis à vis* to our army & officers, he being as we say "blamirt" (made ridiculous), especially so, when Charles Hohenzollern left for Japan, which was done, because we thought Fr. Leopold would leave for Mukden too. Now the people point at Fr. Leopold & the poor fellow is awfully crest-fallen; he has bought lots of clothes & things & made every sort of preparations & even learnt your language & will in no way be of any hindrance to your generals, as he is a quiet man; as the army is large & powerful I think that it does not matter if he goes, so I venture again to ask wether you can permit him to go?

With excuses for bothering you with all these matters, but they are better arranged between ourself & best love to Alix I remain

Ever your most aff^{ate} cousin & friend

WILLY.

XLV.

Berlin, 6/II, 1905.

Dearest Nicky

Your kind letter reached me on the morning of my birthday so early that your wishes were the first I received. Please accept my warmest thanks for them & God grant they may be fulfilled! Your letter reached me in a moment of dire anxiety, for just then my poor boy was seriously ill & it was then a matter of life

and death!¹ The whole following week was a terrible trial & my poor wife suffered agonies watching near the bedside of the patient; thanks be to God that he heard our prayers & saved our boy's life!

My brother in law is deeply grateful for your kind permission accorded to him that he may at last start for the front.² On his way out he is to report himself to you & give you these lines. His entourage has been limited as you wished & he is instructed to keep quite in the background, so as to in no way hamper the Commander-in-Chief, & he begs that the latter may take no undue notice of him, & not to forget that he is a simple spectator who wants to learn the art of war earnestly.

You have been through serious troubles from the effervescence & agitation among the lower classes, I am glad your soldiers showed themselves reliable & true to their sermon to their Emperor.³

¹ Prince Eitel Friedrich, the Kaiser's second son, had been suffering from inflammation of the lungs.

² He reached Petrograd only to be sent back to Berlin instead of Manchuria.

³ The terrible massacre of the people who had gathered to present a petition to the Tsar in front of the Winter Palace took place on January 22nd, 1905. It is characteristic of the Kaiser that he should be glad that the troops had shot down the people, but he makes a curious mistake in his English when he talks of their being true to their "sermon to their Emperor." Apparently he was thinking of the French word *serment*, oath, and turned it straight into English.

The reception of the deputation of workmen¹—who seem to have been ill-advised & partially goaded into striking by agitators—made a good impression everywhere, as it showed them that they could see in the face of their “*Väterchen*” (“Little Father”) if they asked for this honour in due form! Many & most vague are the plans for reform in your country—as far as I can make out—but the most sensible & best adapted to its people & their customs, seems to my humble notion, the formation of a body of men chosen from the best & ablest heads in the different “*Zemstvos.*” This body would be attached to the “Imperial Council” & to it could be given any question of importance having a vital Interest for the whole of Russia to be worked out & prepared for the “Imperial Council”; also men well versed with the special theme under discussion, could be called upon to give their advice, being chosen from every part of the people *ad hoc*. And the *comble* would be if you from time to time presided yourself so as to be able to hear as many different men as possible, in order to be able to form a correct judgement on the question before them. Just like I did in 1890, when I called in the great Comittes for the elaboration of the “Social Laws” for the working classes, after the great Strike — & which I presided for weeks.²

¹ The Tsar received a deputation on February 1st.

² The Kaiser is alluding to the beginning of his reign, when for a time he posed as the Arbeiter-Kaiser, the Workman's Emperor, and called an international congress to

In this manner this body would be able to provide the "Imperial Council" with every information it wants, enabling you in the same time to remain in touch with the great bulk of the lower classes; thereby ensuring to the latter every means to make themselves heard in matters appertaining to their welfare & thus forming a direct canal of communication between the simple folk & their "Emperor & Father." Besides you would be able—on account of your own information—to keep good watch & control on your "Imperial Council" & the "Comittes of Ministers" to see the work by them is done as *you* wish & your PEOPLE want; this way ensure *the executive* once for all to the "*autocratic Czar*" & not to a leading *Minister* with a board of helpless Colleagues blindly following his lead.

On my birthday my tallest aide-de Camp—known to you—H. v. Plüskow—in Paris the ladies called him "*Plus que haut*"!¹ has been made Colonel of your Alexander Grenadiers; they gave the Guard of Honour for my birthday "Razvod"² & looked magnificent, as you will see on the enclosed photos. In due time—when things have calmed down & it suits you—the new Colonel will report himself to you.

As I heard that Serge had mentioned that Berlin for the benefit of the German workers in March, 1890.

¹ A feeble pun on Plüskow's name—quite in the Kaiser's manner. In the Great War Plüskow, now a Lieutenant-General, commanded the 25th division.

² *Razvod*, parade.

your authorities were annoyed with Krupp for not keeping his time to furnish the batteries ordered by Russia I caused an enquiry to be made at his works & send you the copy of the report I received, showing that there is no grounds for the above mentioned complaints. Inquiries made at the offices of the Hamb. Americ. Line equally show that the rumours to the effect, that they had taken guns & ammunition out in their ships for Japan, is totally unfounded; they have not taken arms or stores of war of any kind to or for Japan. It seems that the clouds of French & English Agents besieging the Admiralty & War Office—angry at our firms furnishing your Gouvernement well & better than theirs are able—are starting no ends of canards “*au détriment*” of the Germans; I venture to suggest they should be less believed & kicked into the Newa besides.

The Japs have just ordered 4 Line of Battleships in England; they are to be copies of the newest type in England between 18000–19000 Tons with 25 cm. guns as medium artillery & 30 cm. guns as heavy artillery. With best wishes for a better outlook for you & your country & much love to Alix

I remain ever your most aff-ate

cousin & friend

WILLY.

P.S.—End of next month we shall take our boy to the Mediterranean & to Sicily.

CHAPTER XII

HOW TO STEM REVOLUTION

In this long letter the Kaiser diagnoses the causes of the popular ferment in Russia, and suggests the remedy. The primary cause, he more than hints, is the Tsar himself, who is too much of a recluse, and the remedy is a mediæval spectacle conceived in the very best Reinhardt style.

In accordance with his belief in Divine Right, the Kaiser attaches great importance to the actual person of the ruler before whose "hallowed appearance" the masses are still inclined to bow down. The ruler himself must act and above all appear—Committees of Ministers and Senates are much too vague to invoke any enthusiasm. Therefore the Tsar himself must go to Moscow and, "assembling the nobility and notables in his magnificent palace, speak to them." The speech, it appears, is to consist of promises and reprimands. Then the Tsar, "entouré by the clergy with banners and cross and incense and the Holy Icons," is to read the same speech from the balcony to his assembled loyal subjects in the courtyard below. The loyal subjects are, however, to be encircled by the serried

ranks of armed troops. The Kaiser guarantees that the resulting sensation in the whole world would be "enormous."

Such is the glowing picture held up before the Tsar. Unfortunately, it is accompanied by some advice so blunt, not to say harsh, that even the Kaiser fears it may hurt the Tsar's feelings.

The Tsar is told in so many words that he rushed his country into an unpopular war for which it was not prepared, and the Kaiser rubs it in about the lack of confidence in Kuropatkin, the lack of harmony amongst the various commanders, and the necessity of having a "clear conscience" when embarking on such a struggle.

"These words," adds the Kaiser, "must seem very strange to you." Indeed they must, for, as previous letters have shown, the Kaiser had emphatically declared again and again that the war was a popular one, and, indeed, that it was necessary to Russia's development. Further, he specifically congratulated the Tsar on his clear conscience, and was never weary of telling him that he was the champion of Christendom against the Yellow Peril.

Having thus done his "duty," the Kaiser ends the letter with the usual protestations of loyal friendship.

XLVI.

Berlin, 21/II, 1905.

Dearest Nicky

Frtz Leopold¹ has just returned with your kind wishes & compliments, deeply impressed by your extreme kindness affability as well as by the handsome reception you gave him. How glad I am to hear from him, that you are well, calm selfcomposed hard at work, & that dear Alix & the children are all right. It is so much easier to work at a difficult task, when one knows, that those one loves are well. I am glad I was able to meet your wishes by sending Fr. Leop. to Asia by sea! Your Railways are hereby left unhampered!

¹ The Kaiser's brother-in-law, Prince Friedrich Leopold, had actually started for the Russian front after his many rebuffs, and arrived at Tsarskoe Selo to report himself to the Tsar on February 17th. He was still, however, "blamirt" (made ridiculous), as the Kaiser had complained in earlier letters, for here three days later he is back in Germany with the Tsar's "kind wishes and compliments," but—refusal of transport for the Prince to Asia by rail. By April Leopold, "sent by sea," did reach Peking, but there his mission ended. His intention to make his way through Chinese territory to the Russian lines was frustrated by what was amusingly described in Berlin as the "displacement of the belligerent forces by land and sea," and he apparently filled up his time by visiting the German station at Kiaochau. By now it was April, and Prince Charles Anthony of Hohenzollern, with whose departure for the Japanese front in 1904 Leopold's for the Russian lines had been loudly announced, was on his way home from Tokyo. The whole incident caused amusement in foreign Chancelleries.

What terrible tidings have come from Moscow !¹ These beasts of anarchists have perpetrated a dark & dastardly deed. Poor Ella, what a fearful blow it must have been for her, may God grant her strength & devotion to bear it ! It is very hard for the fine old capital of Russia, that her walls should have been soiled by so foul a crime, but surely she harbours no true citizen drawing a breath who can approve of it ! I cannot believe that these demons have risen from the ranks of your Moskovite subjects, they were probably foreigners from Geneva. For the great bulk of your people still place their faith in their "*Väterchen*" ("Little Father") the Czar & worship his hallowed person. I have gained this conviction from my close observation of the different phases of the movement in Russia as far as I was able from the news coming directly from there & by the opinions expressed by observers, or sometimes Russians, in the European Press.

The Russian² movement is, as you may well

¹ On the day Leopold arrived at Tsarskoe Selo, the Tsar's uncle, the Grand Duke Sergius, was killed instantaneously in Moscow by a bomb thrown under his carriage. The Prince offered to cancel the arrangements for his reception by the Tsar, but dined with him at night, every effort being made to hide from the German the consternation of the Court at the news. "Ella" (the Grand Duchess Sergius) was engaged in attending the wounded in the Kremlin when she heard of the assassination, and rushed hatless and cloakless to its scene.

² The Revolutionary movement, which came to a head with the murder of the Grand Duke Sergius, and led to the


imagine, uppermost in all conversations & correspondence not only in Russia but also without. The whole European Press is flooded with articles about Russia, their opinions depending on the standpoint of the Party they belong to. In this manner a—so to say—*European* point of view has emanated, which seems a fairly correct rendering of the *public opinion* of our *Continent*. Now I thought that it might perhaps be of some interest to you—in your solitude at Tsarske—to have an idea of this European opinion, & to hear how the events in your country are judged by what one sometimes calls the “civilized World in general. I shall therefore in the following lines try to draw a little sketch for you of the “reflected Russian Picture” as seen from outside. Of course as the People outside your country are not initiated to the details of the intricate question of the Duma. Plehve (“Plehwe”), Minister of the Interior, assassinated July 14th, 1904, had been succeeded by Prince Sviatopolk-Mirski, an appointment intended to conciliate the revolutionaries; but following the murder of Sergius he resigned, and (February 18th, 1905) an Imperial manifesto was issued, pronouncedly asserting the reactionary policy of Count Muraviev (“Mouravioff”) and the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Constantine Pobedonostsev (“Pobed idea”). This manifesto was drawn up behind the back of M. Bulygin, Prince Mirski’s successor, whose share in later events is referred to in letters to come. Later in this present letter the Kaiser returns to his scheme outlined in letter No. XLV. for a Russian popular body attached to the Imperial Council, “not a general legislative assembly,” which was, in fact, that embodied in the projected Imperial Duma—a fiasco—of August, 1905, for which we shall see the Kaiser took credit accordingly.

Secret

Berlin 1/2. 1865



Fritz should have just returned with a kind wish ^{improved} as well as by the handsome way you gave him. How glad I am to hear from you, and how self-composed hard at work, as that dear (Lina & the children) are all right. It is so much easier to work at a difficult task, when you know, that those one loves are well. I am glad I was able to meet your wishes by sending Fr. Leo. to Asia by sea! Your Railways are heavily left ^{impaired}! That terrible tidings have come from Moscow! These brutes of anarchists have perpetrated a dark & dastardly deed. Poor Elie, what a fearful blow it must have been for her, may God grant her strength & devotion to bear it! It is very hard for the fine old capital of Russia, that her walls should have been soiled by so foul a crime, but surely she harbours no true it is true drawing a breath who can approve of it! I am not sure that these murders have arisen from the hands of your Muscovite subjects, they were probably foreigners from Geneva. For the great bulk of your people take their faith in their "atolium" the view or working his hull-wal panon. I have gained this conviction from my close observation of the different phases of the movement in Russia, as far as I was able from the news coming directly from there or by the opinions expressed by observers, or sometimes Russians, in the European Press. The Russian movement is, as you may well imagine, supported in all countries - & corresponds not only in Russia but also without. The whole European Press is filled with articles about Russia, their opinions depending on the standpoint of the Party they belong to. In this manner, a - so to say - European point of view has emanated, which somewhat corrects the public opinion of our Continent. Now I thought that it might perhaps be of some interest to you - in your solitude at Eschde - to have any idea of this European opinion, or to have had the events in your country as judged by what one sometimes calls the "civilized world" in general. I shall therefore in the following lines try to draw a little picture for you of the "reflected Russian picture" as seen from outside. Of course as the people outside your country are not "trained" to the details of the intricate questions at issue in Russia they often combine or infer from an effect they see - without knowing its cause - & therefore often a wrong


 This small trinket is the Jewel which I have drawn off the
 early year Public opinion with respect to the small tin trinkets
 has begun. I have given you the reasons why I thought it
 my duty to write these lines. Forcive more, cause your reader
 has no more taken up your precious time & in case I should sometimes have
 been so personal in my report. But as your loyal friend I was a
 great lover as a lover of your "republic" in this world & I wish you
 should by it be rightly or justly judged; & that is my duty too to
 inform you of the "quarrel" the world forms on your account, so as to
 enable you to correct them by your acts if you feel so inclined. At
 all events "Horny sent our mutual peace"

with sincerest wishes for the welfare & future of your country & house &
 best love to Miss & the wish that you may bless & protect her all
 believe me dear & truly as always

Your most aff^{ate} & warm friend

Willy

tions at issue in Russia they often combine or infer from an effect they see—without knowing its cause—& therefore often a wrong combination will lead to a wrong conclusion, because their ignorance of the true facts have left a breach. The foreign spectators are often forced to “Jump to conclusions,” but we must add: “Wo die Begriffe fehlen, stellt oft ein Wort zu rechter Zeit sich ein.” (Where ideas fail, often a word fits in at the right moment.)¹

Therefore I must *avant tout* beg your pardon for writing to you things that you will probably since long have learned from your diplomats reports & crave your kind forbearance & forgiveness if I—as a loyal, firm & devoted friend of yours am obliged to do—also must record opinions, which may seem to you harsh, ungenerous, false or even hurt your feelings. But Russia is in the act of turning over a new leaf in her history, & the development shows a tendency to prepare the beginning for a certain modernization.

Such a process, you will agree, in a mighty nation like yours is bound to command the most widespread interest in Europe, & “*comme de raison*” before all in the neighbouring country. The methods to be adopted, the means which are to be used, & the men who are to do the work have a direct influence across your frontiers, upon the other nations. If I said that the “opinion” was a “European” one I must not

¹ “Doch ein Begriff muss bei dem Worte sein.” Goethe : “Faust.”

omit the fact that many Russians who have passed through here in the last months, & all those living all over Europe—especially in Paris & France—have also contributed to lend colour to the picture ; so that the facts forming the base for the “ European opinion ” mostly are supplied by France, who as “ *amie et Alliée* ” is always the best informed about Russia. The outcome of it is this :

“ *On dit* : “ The Régime Mirski too suddenly allowed the Press a greater liberty than before & dropped the reins—so tightly held by Plehwe—too soon. Hence a sudden flood of unheard of articles & open letters addressed to the Ruler, a thing up to then thought impossible in Russia ; some of them most insolent, calculated to diminish the respect for the Autocratic Rule. This opportunity was seized upon by the Revolutionary Party to get hold of the unsuspecting workpeople, to work them up into a state of ferment & to make them demand things—they were incapable of understanding—in a peremptory, disrespectful manner accompanied by language & acts which came very near looking like revolution. This brought the working class—I am sure against their will—into direct opposition to the Government & into conflicts with the Authorities, who had to maintain law and order. As these misguided & illinformed bands, mostly composed of men taught to look at the Zar as their “ Father ” & to “ *tutoyer* ” him as such, were under the impression that they would be able to place their

wishes before him by coming before his Palace, it is suggested that it might have been practical if the Zar had received a certain number of them—drawn up in the square amid a cordon of troops—and had addressed them from the Balcony of the Winter Palace, where he would have been accompanied by the highest Clergy & the Cross & his Suite as a “Father” speaks to his children, before the Military had to act; it were perhaps not impossible that in this manner bloodshed might have quite been avoided¹ or at least diminished.

The example of Nicolai I² has been often quoted, who quelled a very serious rebellion by personally riding into their midst, his child in his arms, & brought the rebels to their knees in short time. It is thought that now, as then, the person of the Zar has still an enormous hold on the simple people, & that they still bow down to his hallowed appearance. A word from such a position & in such an “*entourage*” would have awed & calmed the masses & sounded far away over their heads into the farthest corner of the Realm surely defeating the agitators. These are still more or less said to be in command

¹ A reference to the terrible massacre of the people presenting a petition to the Tsar in front of the Winter Palace a month earlier.

² This alludes to the famous incident at Moscow in December, 1825, when the Moscow regiment (which had already taken the oath to Constantine, the superseded heir of Alexander I) refused to take another to Nicholas I, who gave this illustration of high courage.

of the masses because such a word has not yet been spoken by the Ruler. The agitators consequently are continuing their game on the imagination of the people in maintaining: "It is His wish, he thinks so, but you cannot hear him because of the bands of officials who manage to fence him off & keep him far away from his people." The beguiled masses follow & believe these men till it is too late, & blood must flow.

Many reforms have been begun, & new laws are being discussed in batches, but curiously enough the People generally say: "This is by Witte, that is inspired by Mouravioff, that is Pobed idea." But the Zar is never named for they are unacquainted with his real thoughts! Though the Committee of Ministers or the Sanate issue the Manifestoes in the Zar's name yet these bodies are much too vague & mysterious to the looker on as to evoke anything like enthusiasm or interest with their acts. In an Autocratic Regime, it is argued, it must be the *Ruler himself* who gives out the password & the programm action in an unmistakable official way. It seems that every body is expecting something of this sort by way of an act of will by the Zar personally. As long as this does not happen the impression at large will continue, that the announced reforms & law paragraphs are only ministerial work meant for show & to throw sand into the peoples eyes; and men will continue to anxiously miss the firm hand on the country's helm, guided by

a master mind with a clear purpose, steering for a clearly defined goal.

This state of things creates a feeling of uneasiness which in its turn evolves dissatisfaction generating "fault finding" *à tort et à travers* on a grand scale even with the mildest man of the very best intentions & actuated by the sincerest & purest motives. In consequence the disappointed spectator—perhaps also the subjects—is more & more prepared to throw on the Zar's shoulders the responsibility for everything with which they are dissatisfied. In ordinary times this matters very little, & in constitutional Nations it is not so dangerous, as the Kings Ministers have to mount the breach & to defend his person. But in Russia, where the Ministers are unable to shield the sacred person of the Ruler, as they are known to be his tools simply, such troubles which fill the Russians minds with unrest and uneasiness, & which lead to the saddling of the Ruler with the odium for everything disagreeable that happens, are a very serious danger for the Ruler & his dynasty because they tend to make him *unpopular*. Now, it is argued, that the "intelligentia" & the Society in parts are already dissatisfied, should the Zar also become "*unpopular*" with the masses the agitators might easily raise such a storm that it would be very uncertain, whether the Dynasty would be able to weather it.

On one point all seem to agree in Europe as by common "consensus" that the Zar personally

is solely responsible for the war, the outbreak, the surprise caused by the sudden attack, the evidence of want of preparation is said to be his fault. They say that the thousands of families who have lost their male relatives by the war, or must miss them for long months, lay the blood & their complaints at the steps of the Zar's throne. It is maintained that the Reservists called out to leave their homes, do it reluctantly, detesting to fight in a country whose existence they did not know of, & for a cause which is unpopular to them. They are careworn when they think of their wife & children they leave behind, slowly sinking into poverty & helpless misery, they lay their anguish & their cares at the door of the Zar's Palace wishing he had left them at home.

The reports from the Foreign & Russian correspondents with the army show it fighting an uphill fight against a most redoubtable foe. It had to begin war under very difficult circumstances, not having had time to properly prepare for the task, under the disadvantage of inferior numbers with which it was unable to stem the inrushing tide of mishaps & to meet the terrible onslaught of a foe known to have been preparing for this action during the last five years. For all this the Zar is thought to be responsible. Also the fearfull losses of the Navy are shouldered upon him.

Now the responsibility for a war is a very serious thing for a Ruler, that I know by ex-

perience from what my late Grandfather told me. He a man personally of the mildest & most peaceful disposition & already in old age was called upon to wage 3 wars during his reign!¹ And for each of them he took the full responsibility. But he had a clear conscience & his people loyally & enthusiastically supported him; the whole nation rising like a man & resolved to win or die, victory or destruction, but fight to the end; he & his subjects felt that Providence was on their side, & that is as good if victory was already won. Such wars then are easy to be borne for the Ruler because his whole people share the burden with him. But the responsibility for an unpopular war is quite a different matter; when the glow of flaming patriotism is unkindled & when the nation as a whole takes no willing part in it, & sullenly sends its sons to the front because the Zar so wills it, but without making his cause their own that is a fearful & heavy load to bear, whose weight can only be lightened by the pureness of the motives which give the Ruler the clearness of conscience necessary to enable him to expect his subjects to fight for him even if they are unable to discern the motives themselves.

These words must seem very strange to you & I hear you ask with astonishment "The war unpopular! Impossible!" I can only answer

¹ Danish War, 1864; Austro-Prussian, 1866; Franco-German, 1870.

that the amount of private correspondence received in France leaves no doubt that it is so.

The war is very unpopular with *all* classes in Russia, the officers not excepted, especially as victories have up to now been denied to the Russian arms. The impression rests with the officers of the French Army—your Allies—that even the confidence in Kouropatkine is beginning to give way, & as if the harmony, essential to success, between the different Commanders of the Russian forces left much to be desired.¹ If true this state of things would hamper the operations & jeopardise the chances for victory; & it is necessary that it should be remedied to & that soon, or the army & its discipline would suffer by it otherwise. The solution I own is most difficult.

It seems however that it is generally agreed to, that Kouropatkine has more talents for a chief of the Staff under another General as leader, than to be a leader himself, as he is rather slow & lacking somewhat in the element called the "Offensive"; this leader is difficult to find as the Generals, senior to Kouropatkine are mostly

¹ For example, five days before the Kaiser wrote this letter, General Grippenberg had arrived in Petrograd from the theatre of war, and in an interview with the *Novoe Vremya* on the same day made his charge against Kuropatkin of failing to support him in the attack on Santefu. The effect of this interview was greatly to depress public opinion under a sense of discord at the front, especially as General Stoessel and the Port Arthur Admirals were at the moment due to arrive at Constantinople.

too old & out of the ranks since long ; besides it would be doubtful, wether he would consent to such a change. On the other hand his knowledge, it is said, of the country, enemy, their mode of fighting, of the feeding & caring for the army are quite invaluable & cannot be missed from the field. The result of all this pondering is, that people begin to hint that the Zar himself might perhaps personally take over the Command in Chief, & joining his brave troops, restore their confidence, cheer them by taking his share of hardships, electrify them by his presence & preserve the services of Kouropatkine for his troops, as he would act as Chief of the Staff to his " war Lord." As I have shown above, there is—one may say—a slowly rising sort of a tide of misinterpretation, unrest & disobedience which must evidently be stemmed & calmed down ; & the European Public as well as the Russian Nation is instinctively looking toward the Zar, & expecting that he will come forth & do something grandly, a great personal act ; meant to show all that he is the Autocratic Ruler of his People & willing to allay their anxieties & pains as far as is in his power. This general expectation is very neatly put into words by someone who said : *Il faut que l'Empereur fasse un grand acte pour affermir son pouvoir de nouveau, et sauvegarder sa dynastie qui est menacée ; il faut qu'il paye de sa personne !*

But how ! After what I wrote about the war, you are perfectly at liberty to ask another question : " Why is the war unpopular, why does

it seem that I am not backed up by my whole People, why do they lack enthusiasm for the fight ; we weré attacked & our flag insulted, & we have to fight for its honour & our prestige!!” The Foreign observers fancy there is an answer forthcoming. It is this. In former times your forefathers before they went to war used to repair to Moscow, pray in the old Churches, & then assemble the Notables in the Kremlin inside, & the People outside in the courtyard & announce to them with great ceremony the necessity for the war & called upon their loyal subjects to follow them to the field battle. Such a call from the Kremlin in Moscow—which is still the real Capital of Russia—never failed to find a response from the Russian Nation ! Such an act, such a call to arms was expected by Moscow & Russia from you in the days following the 8th of February of last year, & they then were ready to answer with enthusiasm smarting under the fell blow, which had fallen on them unawares, & the Citizens of the great Capital looked eagerly forward for your coming : it is even hinted that the officials had your train got ready for starting. But the Zar came not. Moscow was left to itself ; the “ holy war ” eagerly expected was not proclaimed, & there was no call to arms. This Moscow looked upon as a slight, & smarted under it. It has become disaffected & shows her disaffection openly, her example being followed all over Russia. The other day the remark was made “ *Il est temps que l'Empereur remette la main sur*

Moscou ; avec Moscou il parviendra à remettre l'ordre en Russie ; sans Moscou, cela sera très difficile."

Well European observers think that it could be managed, that the Zar could make the expected *Grand acte*¹ by going to Moscow & assembling the nobility & notables in his magnificent Palace speak to them ; perhaps beginning with a reprimand for publishing letters & addresses sent to him, which is bad manners & must not be repeated, & then proclaim the reforms he has prepared for his People as far as he thinks fit. Not the promise of a general legislative assembly, no Constituante or Convention Nationale, but a Habeas Corpus Act & wider extension of the Conseil de l'Empire. No liberty of assembly or of the Press, but strict orders to all censors to abstain from any chicanes henceforth. Further the Zar would let the hearers know what he has decided about the army—in case he thinks it possible or necessary to go out himself—to tell them & to exhort them to abstain from all internal quarrels till the enemy is routed. After

¹ The Kaiser throughout this letter is urging on the Tsar excellent advice to come forth from his solitude at Tsarske, and especially to fulfil the expectations of Moscow by visiting that city. "Above Moscow is only the Kremlin, and above the Kremlin only Heaven," is the Russian saying. It will be noticed how his Reinhardt imagination warms to the description of the "chance" missed by the Tsar of appearing before his people to address them from the Ramparts of the Kremlin. He sets the stage for his correspondent, as if for a scene from "Boris Gudunov."

this the Zar *entouré* by the Clergy with banners & cross & incense & holy Icons would go out on the balkony & read out the same speech he held before, as a Manifestoe to his assembled loyal subjects in the Court Yard below, encircled by the serried ranks of the troops *la bajonette au canon* "*le sabre au poing.*" When you would tell them that you—in case you thought it necessary—would go out to share the hardships of their brothers & relatives in the field, who had to go out by your command, & to cheer them & try to lead them to victory, it is argued that the People will be deeply touched & cheer you & fall on their knees & pray for you. The Zar's popularity would be recovered & he would gain his peoples sympathy besides. All persons who take an interest in the Russian events are unanimous in their opinion that "*à la longue*" the Zar must not remain *in perpetuum* in Tsarske or Peterhof; but that it is sure that should his first appearance be made under the above mentioned conditions, the sensation & impression created in the whole world would be enormous, which would with bated breath listen to him when he addresses it, as his forefathers formerly did, from the Ramparts of the Kremlin.

This, dearest Nicky, is the sketch which I have drawn of the European Public opinion with respect to the events in Russia. In the beginning I have given you the reasons why I thought it my duty to write these lines. I once more crave your pardon for having taken up your precious

time & in case I should sometimes have been to personal in my report. But as your loyal friend I am a jealous watcher of your "*renommée*" in this world & I wish you should by it be rightly & justly judged; & that is my duty too to inform you of the opinions the world forms on your account so as to enable you to correct them by your acts if you feel so inclined. At all events "*Honny soit, qui mal y pense.*"

With sincerest wishes for the welfare & future of your country & house, & best love to Alix, & the wish that God may bless & protect you all believe me dearest Nicky as allways

Your most aff^{ate} cousin & friend

WILLY.

CHAPTER XIII

AN OFFER TO MEDIATE

On the day that the Crown Prince brought his bride to Berlin the Kaiser sends a letter to the Tsar informing him that the game is up and that he had better make peace with Japan.

Only a year previously he had poured scorn on King Edward's efforts to mediate at a time when there was a prospect of Russia emerging from the struggle with her army and navy comparatively intact, and he had insisted that "should in the course of events mediation seem advisable to you it is clear that the first wish for it should come from you." But, as the letters have shown over and over again, consistency was not one of the Kaiser's deadly virtues.

In letter No. XLVIII. he dangles before the Tsar and before himself the cheering prospect of a Five Power group of Russia, Germany, France, Austria, and Italy with the smaller Powers irresistibly attracted towards it, and he thinks that even Japan might be inclined to join it. "This," he adds, "would cool down English self-assertion and impertinence."

In the same letter he is again touting for orders for the new Russian ships, and in frolicsome vein

he makes play in a matrimonial metaphor with the relations of Marianne (France) with her neighbours.

XLVII.

Berlin, 3/VI, 1905.

Dearest Nicky

The kind lines which you entrusted to Micha's¹ care & were given me yesterday have deeply touched me. The memorable events you allude to are all clearly graved in my memory & remind me how the years have gone by, & how often since long we two have been brought into personal relations. The natural consequence of this is a firm feeling of mutual friendship that developed between us both based on a perfect understanding of each other. These relations have flourished through the long years for the welfare of our countries, to rule which we have been called upon by Providence. They were & I hope will continue to be guarantees of Peace & welfare for the two countries as well as for the world. I well remember the moment in the church of the Winter Palais when you took your oath on the glorious tatters of the old Cossack standard, amid the breathless silence of an enormous audience of illustrious people!² How moved

¹ The Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch, who was to represent the Russian Royal Family at the wedding of the German Crown Prince to the Duchess Cecilie of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, in Berlin, on June 6th.

² The reference here is to the ceremony of May 18th, 1884, when the Tsarewitch, Nicholas, took the oath of allegiance and succession in the Winter Palace. He was

your dear father was when he kissed you after the ceremony! How long ago that is! Now you are in his place & have to lead your country through one of the most difficult phases of its development. How I have been feeling for & thinking of you all these last months I need not say! Also of every phase of Admiral Roshestwensky's progress!¹ The great stake which he

dressed in the blue Cossack uniform of the Guard, as Chief Hetman of all the Cossacks, in which he was confirmed at Novo Tcherkask, in the Cossack country, exactly three years later. Contemporary accounts of the Winter Palace ceremony mention that "conspicuous, immediately after the Emperor's younger children, walked Prince William of Prussia." After the religious ceremony in the church was ended the Imperial party returned to the Throne Room, and it was there—the Kaiser's memory here fails him—when the Emperor and Empress had ascended the Throne, that the Tsarewitch advanced to a reading desk supporting a Bible and Cross, and recited aloud the military oath, with one hand touching the "glorious tatters of the old Cossack standard."

¹ Admiral Rozhdestvensky with the Baltic Fleet sailed from Libau on October 15th, 1904, and on the 21st had his panic adventure with British fishing boats in the North Sea, on which he opened fire, a proceeding that led to Diplomatic protest and a demand for compensation (afterwards met) by the British Government. In his tragic progress towards Vladivostok, Rozhdestvensky reached Madagascar on the first day of the New Year, where news of the fall of Port Arthur awaited him; he was joined by reinforcements under Admiral Nebogatov in Kamranh Bay, in Cochin China, and left there on May 14th, for his doom in Tsushima Strait, where Admiral Togo met and annihilated his fleet on May 27th–28th. The wounded Russian Admiral, with his staff, was captured on a torpedo-boat that was too much battered to escape.

represented in your hand has been played & honourably lost. He did everything in his powers to come up to your wishes, but Providence willed it otherwise & he met defeat bravely serving his master to the last! My fullest sympathy is with him & you.

From the purely *military strategical* point of view the defeat in the straits of Corea ends the chances for a decided turn of the scales in your favour; ¹ the Japanese are now free to pour any amount of reserves, recruits, ammunition etc. into Mandschuria for the siege of Wladiwostok, which will hardly be able to resist very long without a fleet to support it. The Army of Lenewitsch² will need at least 3 or 4 fresh Army Corps to bring it up to its former efficiency & even then it is difficult to foretell what the consequences will be & whether another large battle will promise more success than the former did? Formally it's of course possible, even under these adverse circumstances to continue the war for any amount of time. But then on the other

¹ The Kaiser now definitely advises the Tsar to throw up the sponge. In this letter he makes proposals of mediation, against which he had promised to warn off "Uncle Bertie" just a year before. Then, King Edward's wise intervention might have saved Russia's Army and Navy. Now they were shattered, and the Kaiser had got his Commercial Treaty.

² General Linevich commanded the 1st Army under Kuropatkin at the disastrous battle of Mukden, February, 1905, and after the defeat of the Russians there alone retained his formations. In the following month he was appointed to succeed Kuropatkin.

hand the *human* part must not be overlooked. Your country has sent thousands of its sons to the fronts, where they died, or were taken ill & were left cripples for the rest of their lives.

Now as I wrote to you in my last letter—Febr. 6th¹—the war is very unpopular & the people see their sons & fathers reluctantly even unwilling leave their homes to fight for a cause they not only not espouse but abhor! Is it compatible with the responsibility of a Ruler to continue to force a whole nation against its declared will to send its sons to be killed by hecatombs only for his sake? Only for his way of conception of National honour? After the people by their behaviour have clearly shown their disapproval of a continuance of the war? Will not in time to come the life & blood of all uselessly sacrificed thousands be laid at the Rulers door, & will he not once be called upon by Him the Ruler & Master of all Kings & men to answer for those, who were placed under his control by the Creator, who entrusted their welfare to him? National honour is a very good thing in itself, but only in the case that the whole of the Nation *itself* is determined to uphold it with all the means possible. But when a nations ways shows that it has enough & that “*tout est perdu fors l'honneur*” is its way of thinking, is it not reasonable that also its Ruler should then—no doubt with a

¹ The Kaiser had evidently got mixed in his dates, but he had not forgotten his great effort of February 21st, for the purport of that letter is shown here clear in his mind.

heavy heart—draw the consequences & conclude peace? Even though it be a bitter one? Rather than risking through the prolongation of an unpopular war to create such a bitter feeling in his country that it would not even refrain from taking serious steps to eventually force the Ruler to comply to their wish & adopt their views?

Of course there is the Army to be considered. It has fought & bravely fought—through heat & cold for $1\frac{1}{2}$ years trying to win victories for you & your country, but up to now Providence has withheld success from it. Defeat, fearful loss of life, & sufferings unspeakable have instead been sent to the poor Army & have been willingly borne by these capital, brave, quiet, selfsacrificing fellows your soldiers. That they should burn for revenge & be ready to do battle at every possible moment is quite natural. But is there any new leader or General among the Captains who is able to *guarantee* success, so that it would justify a new tremendous effort at the expense of thousands of the soldiers lives? Is the Army really absolutely convinced that it will yet be able to turn the scales? To this question you of course alone are able to know the answer. Should the answer however be given in the negative by your Generals in your Soldiers name, declaring on their honour that they could only die for their Emperor but hardly win any *decisive* victories for him, then I think your conscience may be at rest as to whether you ought to go on fighting or not, &

you could open the Peace negotiations which would be hailed with joy by all your loyal subjects throughout Russia after the tribute of blood they readily gave their Emperor. You may then say like the old French Grenadier Bombardon sings : “ *Das Glück des Kriegs hat wider uns entschieden, doch die Armee hat ihre Pflicht gethan, die Hälfte fiel, der Rest ward Invaliden ! Je nun man trägt was man nicht ändern kann !* ” (Fortune has decided the war against us, yet the army has done its duty ; half fell ; the others became disabled. So now we endure what we cannot alter.)

Napoleon I & Fredrick the Great also suffered defeat !

It must be looked upon as Gods will that things have taken this course ! God has imposed this burthen on you, & it must be borne, but perhaps by His intentions and with His help, lasting good may come out of all this in the end ; a new life & a new order of things for the development of Russia may spring from this time of trial, which would be a recompence your subjects richly deserved.

Forgive the length of my letter, but I feel bound as your friend and colleague to tell you what I think is true and right ! You know the motives that prompt me, & you are free to do with these lines what you think fit.

Should however the ideas propounded in this letter coincide with yours & you think that I could be of any even smallest use to you for the

preparatory steps to bring about peace, pray dispose of me at your leisure.¹ I may perhaps turn your attention to the fact that no doubt the Japanese have the highest regard for America before all other nations. Because this mighty rising Power with its tremendous fleet is next to them. If anybody in the world is able to influence the Japanese & to induce them to be reasonable in their proposals, it is President Roosevelt. Should it meet with your approval I could easily place myself—*privately*—in rapport with him, as we are very intimate; ² also my ambassador there is a friend of his. Besides you have Mr. Meyer³ whom I know since years, who has my

¹ On the day before this letter was written the correspondent of the *Morning Post* in Washington telegraphed that President Roosevelt had offered his services as mediator to the Russian Ambassador there, to whom he indicated Japan's terms. Five days later the American President addressed an identical note to the Russian and Japanese Governments in which "for the welfare of mankind" he urged them to negotiate the peace. Japan replied favourably on June 10th, Russia on June 13th, and in August the Peace Commissioners met at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in the United States, where peace was signed on September 5th.

² It is worth observing that so early as April 2nd Roosevelt, who had made his first move for peace in the middle of January, wrote confidentially to Secretary Hay: "The Kaiser has become a monomaniac about getting into communication with me every time he drinks three pen'orth of conspiracy against his life and power. . . ." Cited in *Scribner's Magazine*, September, 1919.

³ Mr. George von Lengerke Meyer was the United States Ambassador to Russia at this time; he had been Ambassador to Italy earlier.

fullest confidence you may send for him, talk with him openly, he most discreet & trustworthy, a charming *causeur* with agreeable manners!

Here the Brides Entry took place in splendid weather & amidst great enthusiasm! ¹

Best love to Alix from your
aff-ate friend & cousin

WILLY.

XLVIII.

Pillau, 27/VII, 1905.

Dearest Nicky,

On reaching the shores of my home² I take the earliest opportunity of sending you a line to once

¹ The Kaiser found time to write this letter on the day when Berlin was *en fête* for the State entrance of the bride of the Crown Prince. The ceremony was traditional, but the circumstances were unique. Neither the Kaiser nor his father had reached the dignity of Crown Prince when they were married, and it was winter when their brides entered the capital. The Duchess Cecilie came in from Schwerin to the Bellevue Schloss, the historical residence of the brides of the Sovereign House of Prussia on the eve of their marriage, and drove through enthusiastic crowds under the Brandenburgerthor to the Imperial Palace, whither the Crown Prince had proceeded to await her. The 18th century bridal carriage, covered with gold, was drawn by eight black steeds with ostrich plumes; all the accessories of the procession were in keeping, the musical corps of guards being dressed in uniforms of the time of Frederick the Great. When the Courtyard of the Palace was reached, the Crown Prince, at the head of his Guards, saluted the Princess, and the Kaiser assisting her to alight escorted her up the stairs.

² From Bjorke, where three days before the clandestine treaty between "Willy" and "Nicky" had been signed.

more thank you for the way in which you received me & the kindness shown to me by you. The hours I was allowed to spend in your society will, be ever graven in my memory, you were like a dear brother to me. I shall always respond to your feelings with the same warmth & with the same intensity as you & you can count on me as on a firm friend, who is filled with the sole wish & hope to see you successful in your heavy work, & your country soon recover from the severe test it has undergone through the will of Providence.

The Alliance for mutual support in case of need, which we concluded will be of great use to Russia, as it will restore quiet in the minds of the people & confidence in the maintenance of peace in Europe, & encourage financial circles in Foreign countries to place funds in enterprizes to open up Russia, & its vast stores of wealth yet untouched. In times to come may not be impossible that even Japan may fell inclined to join it. This would cool down English self-assertion & impertinence, as she is her ally too. The 24th of July 1905 is a cornerstone in European Politics & turns over a new leaf in the history of the world; which will be a chapter of peace &

Its conditions were to come into operation after the conclusion of peace with Japan, just then being negotiated. The cornerstone of the plot, as the Kaiser believed, had been laid, and France was to tremble in submission when there was unveiled to her the completed five-Power edifice with its annexes of smaller nations.

goodwill among the great Powers of the European Continent, respecting each other in friendship, confidence & in pursuing the general Policy on the lines of a community of interests. The moment the news of the new "*groupement*" will have become known in the world, the smaller nations, Holland, Belgium, Danmark, Sweden, Norway will all be attracted to this new great centre of gravity, by quite natural laws of the attraction of smaller bodies by the larger & compacter ones. They will revolve in the orbit of the great block of powers (Russia, Germany, France, Austria, Italy) & feel confidence in leaning on & revolving around this mass. The dual Alliance combining with the Triple Alliance gives a Quintupel Alliance, well able to hold all unruly neighbours in order, and to impose peace even by force, if there should be a power hairbrained enough to wish to disturb it.

In the conversation with that excellent man Birilew¹—a capital choice you made—I mentioned that when once your types of ships are decided upon, you ought to build them as many as possible at once, & not forget the German private firms, beside the French. Because they would work as for their own country, whereas other Powers

¹ Admiral Bireleff was the Minister whom the Tsar took into his confidence so far as he took anyone into it in the matter of the Secret Treaty. Bireleff's story to Count Witte was that, without being permitted to read the document, he countersigned it, as the Kaiser, to the Tsar's embarrassment, demanded. "A capital choice"—for the Kaiser's purposes.

would make use of these secrets of your builders & engineers against yourself & country. Between Bjorkoe & Hochland I met my cruiser coming from Schweden, unshaven, unwashed & perfectly black like a chimney sweep—a picture of woe—from the smoke of the Torpedoboat.

I got some French news papers, in which I read a résumé of the Brest Fêtes¹: *Il y a 12 ans nous avions Toulon et Cronstadt: c'était le mariage d'amour. Comme chez tous les mariages d'amour est survenu un désillusionnement général surtout depuis la guerre 1904-05. Maintenant nous avons Brest et Cowes: c'est le mariage d'affaires et comme chez tous les mariages d'affaires il en résultera un mariage de raison!* I think that really cool! for an Ally! to let her “*amie et alliée*” drop like that! It will do the French a world of good if you draw the reins a little tighter. Their 10 milliards of francs they placed in Russia of course hinder them from quite falling off, but the language shows to what a point the English flatteries have already brought the French! I hope they wont go quite off their heads at Cowes. To use the metaphor of “mariage” again “Marianne” (France) must remember that she is wedded to you & that she is obliged to lie in bed with you, & eventually to give a hug or a kiss now & then to me, but not to sneak

¹ The British Atlantic Fleet visited Brest from July 10th to July 17th, and the French Northern Squadron made a return visit to Cowes, August 7th-14th.

into the bed of the bedroom of the ever intriguing *touche-à-tout* on the Island.

Now good bye dearest Nicky: dont forget about Magnacharta (habeas corpus act) & the recompense for your line army in bringing it to a level with the Guards! You promised it to me! Dont mind the ill humour of Wlad:¹ or the Guards opposition, remember the 10 army corps in the Field that bled for you, & those in the Provinces at home, who are daily fighting for you against the Revolution. Best love to Alix from your most devoted friend

WILLY.

P.S. As you told me that Boulygine² had already finished a bill after your directions, responding to the ideas I told you about, it would I think be urgent to *promulgate it now at once*, to let the members be chosen as *soon as possible*, so that, when the conditions for Peace are submitted to you: you can communicate them to the *Russian People*, who would have to *bear the responsibility* of rejection or approval! This would shield you from a general attack on your policy from all sides if you did it alone!

¹ The Grand Duke Vladimir, the Tsar's uncle, commanded the Brigade of Guards, and presumably showed ill-humour at the levelling suggestion.

² M. A. T. Bulygin, who succeeded Prince Mirski as Minister of the Interior, drew up to the Tsar's direction the first scheme for a Representative Assembly to have a consultative voice in the legislation. The Kaiser's complaisance at its "responding to the ideas I told you about" comes out in this letter and later.

CHAPTER XIV

KING EDWARD ATTACKED

The Kaiser's spleen against King Edward becomes particularly venomous, and he quotes the report of a German gentleman! whom he sent to Cowes "to observe the Entente Cordiale." King Edward's alleged remarks are to show to the Tsar "how very wide is the net of secret information he has cast over Europe and over you."

He is equally ridiculous on the subject of the Royal Navy, for he actually gave instructions to his own Navy "to lay themselves near the British Fleet, to give them a dinner, and make them as drunk as possible to find out what they are about and then sail off again."

It will be noted towards the end of letter No. XLIX. that he makes use of the visit of the British Fleet as a means for obtaining public support for a further extension of the German Fleet. The Germans, who were to be sent down by rail and steamer to see the British men-o'-war, will, the Kaiser hopes, "learn to understand the necessity of building a strong fleet."

As the notes show, this visit was also used by the Germans to create mistrust between Great Britain and Russia.

XLIX.

Schloss Wilhelmshöhe 22/VIII 1905.

Dearest Nicky

Your manifest¹ directing the formation of the "Duma" made an excellent impression in Europe—especially in my country, & I beg you to receive my warmest congratulations. It is a great step forward for the political development of your country & gives the people an opening by which they will be able to bring before you their hopes & wishes, & enable a combined work of Master & Country for the Nations welfare. You will be able to take touch with all sorts & conditions of men & infuse into them directly your spirit & your ideas, which was formerly hindered by the great bulky wall of the "Tchin" bureaucracy regards with much suspicion by your subjects. Excuse my telegram² the other day but I thought that it may be a good idea to try

¹ Wherever the Tsar's manifesto of August 19th made an excellent impression it did not do so in Russia itself. Within a few days of this letter that country was in the grip of the great strike, and the forces were arrayed which, in October, compelled the Tsar to promise the more liberal constitution that brought the Duma into existence.

² The complacency of the Kaiser, however, over his advice for a purely "consultative body" was great. Two days before this epistle he sent this telegram to the Tsar: "My Ambassador just informed me that you have ordered the decree to be published which renders to convocation of 'Great Duma' the statutes to be formed on lines somewhat similar to our 'Staatsrath,' giving it form of 'consultative body.' I beg you to accept my warmest congratulations for this great step forward in the development of Russia."

the "mettle" of the "Duma" & to see whether it is workable or not. In the same time you get an excellent insight into the mind of your People & make them carry a part of the responsibility for the future, which it would have probably liked to saddle solely upon you, thereby making a wholesale "*critique*" & dissatisfaction with deeds done by *you alone* impossible.

I send you enclosed some interesting articles showing the tendency of the thoughts of France. The British have prostituted themselves¹ before France & the French sailors in the hopes of gaining them over from you, & stopping any "*rapprochement*" between you, me & them. The French felt much flattered, but I hope the sensible people have kept their heads cool & clear & seen, that all is "*cousu de fil blanc*," & that Britain only wants to make France her "catpaw" against us, as she used Japan against you. The article in the "*Forum*" is written by Maurice Low, the correspondent of the "*Morning Post*" sent to America.² It is cleverly written

¹ A reference to the reception that August of the French Northern Squadron at Cowes, following the visit of the British Fleet to Brest.

² Mr. A. Maurice Low, then, as now, correspondent of the *Morning Post* in Washington, whose unusually well-informed messages about the Russo-Japanese peace negotiations were eagerly read. His articles in the *Forum*, July-September, 1905, admiringly referred to by the Kaiser, predicted an extension of the scope of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (due to expire in 1907) as the result of the Russo-Japanese War. Originally a purely defensive Alliance, it

& most indiscret about the extension of the new Anglo-Japanese treaty which was kept quite secret in London till now, but he seams to have let the "cat out of the bag."

The "Arch intriguer—& mischief-maker"¹ in Europe as you rightly called the King of England has been hard at work in the last months. At Cowes he said to one of my friends—a German gentleman I sent to observe the "Entente Cordiale"—"I cant find out what has been going on at Bjorkoe! Benckendorff² knows would now provide for each coming to the assistance of the other when attacked, without waiting for a hostile combination to be formed; would embrace Middle as well as Far East; and secure for Japan the British Fleet and for Great Britain the Japanese Army against Russia's ambitious designs on India. The articles predicted that Japan would enter into this new Alliance in spite of the sinister influences being brought to bear on her.

¹ It is unnecessary, of course, to emphasise how ungenerous and untrue are the Kaiser's remarks about King Edward, but it is perhaps worth while to quote from the official documents recently issued by the Danish Government regarding the hitherto secret diplomatic negotiations which centred round the neutrality of Denmark about this period. Count Frijs was charged on behalf of the Danish Government to draw the attention of King Edward to the dangers of a European war. His Majesty replied: "In my opinion you take too gloomy a view of the future. The only causes of conflict which have arisen (Fashoda and the Morocco question) have been happily settled, a fact which shows a distinct will-to-peace tendency in Europe; but I will admit this, that with a man of so impulsive a temperament as the German Emperor at the head of the greatest military Power in Europe anything may happen."

² Count Benckendorff, at that time and until his death in 1916 Russian Ambassador in London. In the light of the

nothing—for he always tells me everything—Copenhagen knows nothing & even the *Emperors mother*¹—who always let me know everything—

Kaiser's reference to him here these telegrams exchanged in the October following make amusing reading. The snub to "Willy" by "Nicky" will be observed :

Neues Palais, October, 1905.

"It seems that the . . . arch mischief-maker of Europe in London is at work again, the revelations of Delcassé notwithstanding, which terribly compromised him and his Government, as planning war against our friendly nation in peace. Like brigands in a wood he has sent Benckendorff—your Ambassador—to Copenhagen on a clandestine mission to your mother, with the instructions to win her over to influence you for a policy against me. The Foreign Office in London knows about his journey, which is denied at your Embassy there. I may, of course, be misinformed, but the extraordinary behaviour of England leads me to think that it cannot do harm to inform you at all events. It is peculiar that your Ambassador should lend himself to such tricks, as they are bound to be found out, thereby creating fresh excitement, of which I think we had quite enough lately.

"WILLY."

"Best thanks for your telegrams. Benckendorff by my permission, as my mother invited him to come as a friend of the Danish family. What sort of conversation went on I certainly do not know. But I can resolutely assure you that nothing can influence me except the interest, safeguard, and honour of my country. Benckendorff is a loyal subject and a real gentleman. I know he would never lend himself to any false tricks, even if they came from the 'great mischief-maker' himself. Delcassé's revelations are extraordinary, but I think Bülow's conversations with some newspaper correspondents have not helped much to clear up the situation.

"NICKY."

¹ The ex-Empress Marie Feodorovna, sister of Queen Alexandra.

has heard nothing from her son this time ; even Lambsdorff¹—who is *such a nice man & lets me know all I want to hear*—knows nothing or at least wont tell ! It is very disagreeable !” This shows you how very wide is the net of secret information he has cast over Europe & over you. He first let his Press launch the idea of a visit to me,² & when all the papers of Europe had taken it up & talked it over, suddenly published an insulting *démenti*, declaring *my Foreign office* had started the idea. The finest lie I ever came across ! After this he goes & invites my son behind my back to come & visit him in England ! I have of course stopped that business. His fleet is in the act of visiting our shores³ & I

¹ Count Lamsdorf, the Tsar's Foreign Minister.

² The *Morning Post* Correspondent in Berlin, under date August 16th, telegraphed : “ The omission of King Edward to visit the Emperor William on his way to Ischl is regarded as highly significant, and the writers who reflect the views prevailing in high quarters now admit that the visit of the British Fleet is now regarded in Berlin in the light of an act of friendship towards Germany. They are accordingly at pains to show that the British cruise must be peculiarly disagreeable to Russia, and to excite the suspicions of that country anew against Great Britain.”

³ The British Fleet, which this month visited the Baltic, arrived at Copenhagen two days before this letter was written and received a most hearty welcome. About this time the Correspondent of the *Morning Post* in Berlin reported that the Magistrates of Swinemünde had rejected a motion to accord a festive reception to the British Fleet. A week later they voted 3,000 marks for that purpose. The explanation emerges in the postscript to the next letter.

think this will open the eyes of many Germans who are still loth to vote money for an extension of our Fleet ; we shall send many down by rail & steamer to take an object lesson. They will I hope learn to understand the necessity of building a strong fleet.

The enclosed brochure was sent me from America. I enclose it, as I think it may interest you, especially from the point of view of the future plans England has *vis à vis* of Russia in Asia & what she is trying to use the Japanese for. It throws light on the Japanese expedition to the Turkestan frontier I told you about.

L.

Cronberg 24/VIII 1905.

To-day 4 weeks ago "Bjorkoe"!¹ The delightful hours we spent together! And the lasting bonds of unity of friendship which will bring fruits of good to our countries, so God will. I just got your kind long telegram! So many thanks! most kind to take so much trouble. I quite understand your position & resolutions! As soon as you are sure of your People backing you up, & they are ready for further fighting then all is right, & wish you Heavens help & a speedy victory. I am on a visit to my

¹ The Kaiser is still exulting over pulling off the Secret Treaty at BJORKE on July 28th.

sisters¹ here, who just returned from a long stay in England. They tell me the news of our meeting at Bjorkoe threw all the people there & the press into the state of wildest excitement. The King & the Court before all were quite "*aus dem Häuschen*" (in the dark), he trying to find out from my sisters whether they know anything of what has going on! They laughed him in the face of course, & were much amused.

The extract from the letter of Bismarck to Schleinitz² from Russia in 1858 will interest you as it shows that history repeats itself & the times were very like what they are now. I saw Grand Duke Georg today with Minny of Greece,³ he told me his news from private source were that the publication of the "Duma" had created great satisfaction in Russian provincial circles; & that sympathy for Germany & acknowledgement for our behaviour to Russia during the war were warm & lively. My sisters & Tino & all the family send you their very best love!

¹ Princess Sophie, married to Constantine ("Tino"), Duke of Sparta, afterwards King of Greece; and Princess Marguerite, wife of Prince Frederick-Charles of Hesse. Both, with their families, and also "Tino" had paid a six-weeks' visit this summer to Buckingham Palace, returning to Cronberg on August 15th.

² Freiherr von Schleinitz was German Foreign Minister, and Bismarck Ambassador in Petersburg, at the period when the letter printed below was written. It was one of a series that passed between the two statesmen during 1858-1861.

³ The Grand Duke George of Russia married Marie, a Princess of Greece, presumably the "Minny" of the letter. He was killed by the Bolsheviks.

Dont forget the order ranking the “avancement” of the line¹ equal to the Guard. It will answer splendidly!

I enclose some new postcards of the Saalburg² I visited to-day, it is nearly finished & looks lovely in the fine summer weather. Now Good bye my dear Nicky, God help you & protect you & all your family my prayers will always follow you as from your

most devoted & aff-ate friend & cousin

WILLY.

25/VIII.

P.S.—Just when I had finished my letter I got a message from President Roosevelt.³ Knowing my interest in the Peace Conference he kindly sent me information of the situation & of the points at issue upon which there is a difference

¹ It will be remembered that in the previous letter the Kaiser urged the Tsar to recompense his line army by bringing it to a level with the Guard.

² An ancient Roman fort near Cronberg, excavations at which had begun in 1868. The reconstruction of the Prætorium had recently been completed.

³ Mr. Roosevelt found a useful instrument, for putting pressure on the Tsar, in the Kaiser, who naturally was delighted to adopt the rôle. That the recipient of these attentions was not blind to their inspiration is evident from his remark to the American Ambassador in Petrograd, Mr. Meyer (whom the Kaiser had recommended to him for counsel), that “whenever Meyer made a visit to him, simultaneously there came a cable from the German Emperor.” But the President’s estimate of King Edward’s policy in these negotiations would have been very different had he been privileged to read these letters.

of opinion between Japan & Russia, and his proposals for meeting the wishes of both belligerents as far as it is possible. I think his proposals most sensible & practical & hope that they may come up to your expectations. As far as I can make out they seem to secure to Russia all the advantages of an honourable Peace. But of course it is for you solely to decide, as you are best able to judge of the feeling of your countrymen. Once more I beg your pardon for being such an awful bore & bothering you, but you know that it all comes from a friendly heart, which beats warmly for you & your welfare as well as that of your country.

I have ordered my fleet to shadow the British & when they have anchored to lay themselves near the British Fleet to give them a dinner & make them as drunk as possible to find out what they are about; and then sail off again!¹ I think the astonishment will be great as the English as well as our people believe that our fleet will be in the North Sea! So dont tell any-

¹ The sting of his Fleet's visit is revealed in this post-script. The action of the Kaiser in sending it to Swinemünde, according to the Berlin Correspondent of the *Morning Post*, was characterised by a large section of the German Press as "a superfluous display of friendship towards the British visitors." However, the visits to both Swinemünde and Danzig both passed off successfully, and Admiral Sir A. K. Wilson received this telegram from the Kaiser: "It is a great pleasure to me to learn that you feel it a pleasure to meet your comrades of the German Fleet."

body for the secret must be well kept ! Tata !
this is the real end of my epistle !

WILLY.

The following is a translation of the Bismarck letter to which the Emperor refers :

“ Everyone who does not exclusively live by his official position,” writes Bismarck, “ is wishing and expecting for Russia, since the promulgation of the Peasant Laws, some form of Constitutional arrangement by means of which the people, and particularly its higher grades, may have some share in the government of the country : the Moderates in moderation ; but one hears the voices of those who remember the Convention and have already exploded the views of the Girondists. One scents the activities of agitators, who are neglecting no means of spreading calumnies against the Court and the Imperial House among even the humblest of the people. The Emperor’s immediate *milieu* is, unfortunately, not free from elements which offer the worst opportunities for such as these, whose actions, like the responsibility for the whole Augean stable of official mismanagement, are artfully transferred on to the Emperor’s shoulders. Without doubt his kindly heart is too indulgent towards many of the people he knows ; and his honest striving to improve matters is well known even to those who reproach him with the failure of these attempts. The care of the poor, even the pay of the common soldiers—so it is said—like the provision of functionaries for the Grand Dukes and the household expenses of the Emperor’s younger sons—all are reckoned among the disbursements of the Court, and in this way much poverty is relieved. People holding high positions, by office or by birth, talk to me of revolutions as things that might well be possible. Personally they are very little affected over the matter, which they consider concerns the Emperor alone ; so there is no sort of evidence that they have any idea of devoting their lives to the defence of the Throne.

“Indeed, in conversation here people have always exonerated themselves from blame for the contemptible position occupied by those holding official authority. Formerly, however, the wind of collective European opinion was not so adverse to monarchical authority as it is to-day—especially during the past four years—in Russia. Perhaps it will pass, like an intermittent fever; but perhaps it may contain a tiny accidental spark which shall burst into a big flame here. From officers one hears complaints of the want of discipline among the soldiers, and they talk of war as being necessary, lest some even more dangerous spirit should infect them. All over the world the outlook is threatening, and when one notices that the nobility here, while to all seeming of placid and peace-loving temperament, are buying up whole loads of revolvers and munitions in preparation for the summer I really do not know whether it were not better to be a Christian dog in Damascus than a gentleman in the land of the Emperor Nicholas. The prospects of the Germans in North Schleswig are at any rate less unpleasant than those of the Russian landed proprietor, who goes about among his peasantry stuffed with pistols, like a human infernal machine.

“The Emperor is impressed by the seriousness of the situation in the interior, and takes less interest than he once took in external politics. Yesterday he told me, sighing deeply, that Wednesdays were his only happy days, since they allowed him twenty-four hours' rest from business. So every Tuesday night he goes off hunting. At my recent audience he was very depressed. He presented me with his portrait and one of the blessed Empress's, and gave in addition a description of the originals of all the family portraits hanging in the room. If words could kill, then not a single male soul of the entire House of Hollstein-Gottorp would now survive. Everyone does justice to the Emperor's noble heart; yet the 'buts' which follow are such as to impel me to take my leave or to beg them to change the conversation. It is very wrong that the Emperor should be held responsible for the manifold widespread abuses associated with the name of Minna Iwanowna—in German, Frau

von Burghof—the friend of old Adlerberg. The Emperor Nicholas certainly did not expect that officers of the Guard would so soon be discussing in the presence of foreigners the question whether they should fire on the people or not. For a long time past the Police system here has been so good that the Emperor was bound to hear of most of these things, and the practical Chief of the Department, Timascheff, takes a very gloomy view respecting the immediate future.”

CHAPTER XV

THE GREAT COMBINE

We have now reached a critical stage in European relations. The Kaiser has got the secret Russo-German Treaty, signed in July, 1905, in his pocket, but it is clear that no Russian, and probably, notwithstanding the Kaiser's assertions about Bülow's approval, no German statesman, could place any faith in it, for, as already stated, it imposed upon Russia obligations which she could not possibly carry out in view of her existing Treaty with France.

On the other hand, these and other intrigues of Germany coupled with her provocative policy in regard to armaments and other questions were bringing Great Britain and France closer and closer together. The Kaiser is now fully aware of the fact. He has the usual sneer at King Edward and the usual absurd story about his tactics—on this occasion a reported statement that the King is alleged to have made at Marienbad to the American Ambassador at Vienna.

To prevent "the whole world becoming John Bull's private property," the only way, so the Kaiser thinks, is the "Continental Combine." In

this letter, however, America is to be its buttress, and not, as he hoped in a previous communication, Japan. He uses every argument to commit the Tsar irrevocably to this combine, including the well-worn one about the "Crimea combination," that is to say, the interfering policy of the "liberal Western Powers" in internal Russian affairs.

He is again sarcastic at the expense of the British Fleet's visit to Danish waters, and he again hopes that the Tsar may have a new Fleet, doubtless with an eye to the interests of the Stettin and Kiel firms.

In letter No. LII. he refers to the Morocco negotiations, and insists that the German policy is only that of the Open Door.

LI.

Rominten,¹ 26/IX, 1905.*Dearest Nicky,*

Witte's visit² gives me the agreeable opportunity to send you a few words. This always affords me great pleasure & I only trust that the letter may not bore you too much. I had most interesting conversations with Witte. He has

¹ The favourite hunting box of the Kaiser in East Prussia.

² Count Serge J. Witte, President of the Tsar's Council of Ministers and ex-Minister of Finance, was chief Russian envoy at the Russo-Japanese Peace Conference at Portsmouth, U.S.A., which concluded with the Treaty signed September 5th. On his way home from America he stopped at Paris, where he took a hand in the Morocco settlement; and while there was requested from Petrograd to go on to Rominten at the Kaiser's suggestion. He arrived at Rominten on the day this letter was written, and left on the day following.

impressed me as a man of uncommon perspicacity & foresight & a rare gift of energy. He has managed to turn—with Roosevelts equally energetic & clever help—the Portsmouth Conference to a very good end. So much so, that in the rest of the world it is regarded as a signal & effective victory of Russia over Japan. This may be of interest to you, because doubtless enemies of his & invidious people in Russia, may wish to detract from his work, & make believe that he has not safeguarded his country's interests as he ought to. Great men—& he must be I believe counted among them—will ever have to face a certain amount of envy & lies which counterbalance the share of praise lavished on them by their admirers. But it is the facts that speak for them, & Portsmouth speaks for itself.

I found to my great satisfaction that his political ideas¹ fully coincide with the base upon which we rested our views exchanged at Björkoe. He is a firm advocate of a Russo-German-France Alliance which as he tells me will be gladly “cotaoygé” by America—for the maintenance of the Peace & *statu quo* in the world, the balance

¹ The present letter reflects the disingenuousness of the Kaiser in this interview with Witte, which makes the Count's visit a famous incident in the story of the Secret Treaty. There is no doubt that “his political ideas,” which the Kaiser here travesties as acquiescence in the clandestine BJORKE Alliance, were generalities, and that Witte left Rominten as ignorant of the Treaty's existence as when he arrived there. Knowledge of it, in fact, only came to him piecemeal in Petrograd later.

of which has been disturbed by the Anglo-Japanese Treaty.¹ He was consequently very agreeably surprized when I told him of our work at Bjorkoe. It is the grouping of Powers which is the most natural—they being the representants of the “Continent”—& will have the consequence of drawing all the other lesser Powers in Europe into the orbit of this great block. Amerika will stand on the side of this “Combination.” Firstly from the “Racial” point of view, they are decidedly “White” anti “Yellow.” Secondly politically, from fear of Japan on account of the Philippines upon which the Japanese have cast longing eyes, their loss would impair the American position in the Pacific. Thirdly from the dangerous competition of the Japanese trade sustained by very cheap labour & without the cost of long transport with its tariffs for freight & for the passage of the Suez Canal. The sums to be paid for its passage being a heavy tax on the whole *European* commerce. The same thing will be with the “Panama Canal.”

The “Continental Combine” flanked by America is the sole & only manner to effectively block the way to the whole world becoming John Bull’s private property, which he exploits at his hearts content after having, by lies & intrigues without end, set the rest of the civilized nations by each others ears for his own personal

¹ The Treaty between England and Japan, signed January 30th, 1902, and due to expire in 1907, was expanded in its scope and signed on August 12th, 1905.

benefit. We see this pernicious principle at work now in the Marocco question, in which John Bull is equally doing his best to set the French dead against us.¹ Thereby causing endless delay & trouble. But your Allies are so hypnotized by "Cowes" & "Brest" & the "Entente Cordiale" that scarcely do anything in Foreign Politics without consulting London first! I think it would be a good thing if you would have Nelidoff² advised to put a stop to this Anglomania & to remind the French that their Future lies with you & us; for I hear that he is also somewhat "anglomane." Witte kindly gave the French advice about Marocco to take reason & I have ordered Radolin³ to be as "conciliant" as possible, so that I hope that we shall come to terms in a few days.

With regard to the Anglo-French "Entente Cordiale" you may perhaps find in my letters to you from two years ago,⁴ where I warn you of the

¹ The Franco-German Agreement, embodying a programme for the projected Conference (afterwards held) at Algeciras, was signed two days after this letter was written.

² M. Alexander Ivanovitch Nelidoff was Russian Ambassador to France from 1903 until his death in 1910. He played a considerable part in settling the Dogger Bank incident in the Russo-Japanese War.

³ Prince Hugo de Radolin was German Ambassador in Paris at this time.

⁴ Among them that of November 19th, 1903 (No. XXVIII.), in which the Macedonian reforms after the Mürzteg meeting, the "Crimean Combination," and the contrasts of "Parliamentary Governments" and "Imperial Monarchies" jostle in an insinuating paragraph.

beginning "Rapprochement" of the two Governments & countries; when they commonly opposed your policy in Macedonia after the "Mürzsteg Negotiations." I then showed that they were resuming their old former Policy of the "Crimeah" & called them the "Crimean Combination." The *Liberal* Western Powers" have combined as I predicted; & are not only opposing you in a foreign Policy, but more hotly & open on the field of internal Russian policy. The French & English Liberal Press quite openly & in conjunction denounce all monarchical & energetic actions in Russia—the "Zardom" as they call it—& openly espouse the cause of the Revolutionaries for the expansion & maintenance of liberalism & "enlightenment" against the "Zardom" & "Imperialism" of "certain" backward countries. That is yours & mine. The phrase which the French are always retaught by England is "to uphold in common the interests of Liberalism in the world & to propagate it in other countries." That means to foster & help revolutions all over Europe especially in countries which are happily not yet under the absolute dominations of those infernal parliaments.

Alvensleben¹ who is on leave at home is I am sorry to say quite broken down in health & has begged to be allowed to resign & leave the service. With your kind approval I propose to

¹ Count Friedrich Johann Alvensleben, German Ambassador at Petrograd, 1901–1905.

send your court W. v. Schön¹ Minister at Copenhagen. He was formerly a long time in Paris, is married to an elegant & most charming wife, he accompanied me on my journey to Tangiers & the Mediterranean this year & is a loyal quiet discreet man; a personal friend of mine having my fullest confidence since many years. He is well acquainted with all the English intrigues in Denmark, many of Which he was able to counteract. He knows Italy well, speaks french, italien, english like his mother-tongue is most active & a good lawntennis player, in case you should need one.

The visit of the british Fleet at Swinemünde & Danzig went off without collisions. The public was civil & "hospitalier" but without enthusiasm. At Esbjerg I had one of my friends who speaks Danish & english well. He went on board the ships disguised as a coal merchant & frequently dined or lunched with the officers. They told him that they were sent to the Baltic to show the emperors, that they had no power whatever to decide anything as they pleased, for the British Fleet would never allow them to !!! A fine piece of impudence!! May your fleet soon lay again on the waters in fine ships of new types commanded by ablebodied & clear minded officers & well trained men.

¹ Baron W. von Schoen, German Minister at Copenhagen from 1900 to 1905, was appointed German Ambassador to Russia in the latter year. In 1910 he became Ambassador in Paris.

A piece of news that will amuse you come from Vienne a few days ago. The American Ambassador Mr. Bellamy Storer¹ told a friend of mine, that he had been with King of England at Marienbad a few days before the conclusion of peace. The King told Storer that there was no idea of Peace as Japan would never be allowed to give up the demand for indemnity, which was due to it as Victor. He then went on saying that it was most necessary that Russia should be & remain financially helpless & crippled for a long time. Storer said he was in a very awkward position as the king asked his advice on the promenade loudly before a large number of people who were accompanying him & who were listening!!! It seems he is afraid Amerika will join the other nations in giving Russia money, when a great loan is interntionally issued; and wanted to influence Storer to report home to that effect which he of course refused to do.

Now the Peace being signed & the ratifications even to be exchanged, would not you think it practically, if we to instruct our ambassadors at foreign courts identically without letting them into the secret of the existence of a treaty—that in all matters not specially affecting our countries in their own interest, but in all questions of general policy our ambassadors are to work together & inform eachother of their instructions

¹ American Minister earlier to Belgium and to Spain, Mr. Storer was Ambassador to Austria-Hungary from 1902 to 1906.

& ideas. This common exposal of a common cause, will not fail to impress the world that our relations have become closer & thus slowly prepare your Allies the French, for the new orientation which their policy must take for the entry into our treaty. The Marocco question will be settled in a few days.—Witte having talked sense & given good advice to both sides, & I have instructed to be as “*coulant*” as possible. Witte has charmed all the ladies & Gentlemen here by his amusing stories about America & his experiences which will greatly amuse you too!! Now good-bye dearest Nicky, love to Alix a kiss to the boy from ever your most devoted

Friend & cousin

WILLY.

Three days later the Kaiser took up the separate treaty question in a telegram to the Tsar :—

“September 29, 1905.—The working of the treaty, as we agreed at Björkö, does not collide with the Franco-Russian Alliance, provided, of course, the latter is not aimed directly at my country. On the other hand, the obligations of Russia toward France can only go as far as France merits them through her behaviour. Your Ally notoriously left you in the lurch during the whole war, whereas Germany helped you in every way as far as it could without infringing the laws of neutrality. That puts Russia morally also under obligations to us. Do your utmost by the nation to conclude peace on the proposals to your delegates at Washington, and if thus Russia thinks its honour not impaired, you can return your sword to the scabbard with the words of Francis, “*Tout est perdu fors l'honneur.*” Nobody in your Army or country or the rest of the world has the right to blame you for this act. If the Duma thinks the proposal

unacceptable, and the Japanese Government refuse to treat on another basis, then again Russia, through the voice of the Duma, invites you, its Emperor, to continue the fight, thus taking full responsibility for the consequences itself and shielding you once for all before the world and history in the future from the reproach that you sacrificed thousands of Russia's sons without asking the country, or even against their wishes. This will lend your personal action a grand stimulus and strength, as you will feel yourself borne by the will of the whole of your people, decided to fight to the bitter end, regardless of time, losses, and privations.

“Meanwhile, the indiscretions of Delcassé have shown the world that, though France is your ally she, nevertheless, made an agreement with England when England was on the verge of surprising Germany with British help in the middle of peace, while I was doing the best to you and your country, her ally. This is an experiment which she must not repeat, and against the repetition of which I must expect you to guard me.

“I fully agree with you that it will cost time, labour, and patience to induce France to join us both, but the reasonable people will in the future make themselves heard and felt. Our Moroccan business is regulated to the entire satisfaction, so the air is free for a better understanding between us. Our treaty is a very good base to build upon. We joined hands and signed before God, who heard our vows. I therefore think that the treaty can well come into existence. What is signed is signed; God is our testator.”

LII.

Neues Palais 28/XI 1905.

Dearest Nicky

The Chancellor,¹ to whom I read some parts of your letter, told me that our purely defensive

¹ In letter No. XXXVII., the Kaiser more than once credited the Chancellor, Prince von Bülow, with a share

agreement cannot possibly clash with the French treaty concluded by your Father. For if it did, the meaning would be, that by the French treaty Russia is bound to support France even in a *war of aggression* against Germany! But such a contingency i.e. Russia supporting France in an *aggressive policy against us*, we never till now looked upon as deserving even a moments consideration; because your dear father often told me, he would at all times set his face openly against any war of aggression. Besides being on the most friendly and intimate terms with me. This is illustrated by the fact that in 1891 during the manœuvres near Narva, he openly expressed to me his aversion to the French Republican system, advocating the restoration of Monarchy in Paris, for which undertaking he begged me to help him. If your French agreement is like ours purely defensive, then there is no incompatibility between the two, one does not exclude the other, so that no further declaration is required.

On the other hand I can understand that it may be opportune for you, not to publicly proclaim yourself as ally, at the moment when the international revolutionists are spreading broad-

in drafting the Secret Treaty. He even quoted words used by von Bülow in respect of it. It is possible that the Kaiser—a theatrical person—might easily have invented the Chancellor's remarks. It is at least incredible that the Chancellor approved of the Treaty as it was signed, which must have seemed as absurd to the German Government as it did to the Russian.

cast over the word the infamous lie of my having tried to influence you in favour of reaction.

My fervent wish is that you may pass unharmed through the present crisis, and that your people may fully grasp your noble intentions. Now you must wait and see how the institutions you called into life work practically; only after this it will later on be possible to judge whether and how modifications would be required.

As for your opinion of Witte, I of course cannot pretend to know him as well as you do, but he certainly impressed me as a man much above the average. At the same time, I am glad you took your uncle Nicolas Nicolaiewitsch¹ into your confidence. He appears to be as representing an element of firmness; and firmness may be necessary to maintain order. Without orders young liberty cannot live.

With regard to Tattenbach & Morokko your French information is incorrect.² I do not aim nor ever aimed at any special advantage for Germany, & Tattenbach never advocated any Policy of his own. This is a thing unheard of in my service, my representatives in foreign countries only advocating one policy & that is mine!

¹ It is understood that the Grand Duke Nicolas's was the effective influence in bringing about the annulment of the Secret Treaty between the Emperors, which now became the business of their statesmen.

² A disturbing element in the negotiations leading up to the Morocco agreement, now being arrived at, was the mission of Count de Tattenbach to the Sultan of Fez to secure special privileges for Germany.

We only wish to secure the open Door, that is an interest we have in common with all the other seafaring & trading nations. There is no reason whatever why an equitable arrangement with France should not be arrived at on that ground. I trust that you whose permanent aim is to promote peace between all nations & goodwill all over the civilized world, will lend your powerful help to bring the Conference to a general understanding, based on the maintenance of the open Door. A word in this direction to your representative at the Conference would be most advantageous in lightening the task of my minister.

With best love to Alix & the baby believe me dear Nicky

Ever your
WILLY

LIII.

Neues Palais 30/XII 1905.

Dearest Nicky

General Tatischeff has given me your letter & presented himself in his new "charge." It is of the highest importance for me to know that he enjoys your full confidence, & I will "*le cas échéant*" with pleasure avail myself of his services in my private relations with you. He is welcome here & in the ranks of my headquarters, to which he now belongs.

The new ambassador von Schoen is leaving to-day with Gen. v. Jacobi.¹ I can vouch for the General's character in every way, He was my first adjutant I ever had, studied with me at Bonn, served in the 1st Guards with the 1st Battalion; later on for a second time became my aide de camp after I came to the throne, spent several years as milit. attaché at Rome & finally commanded Mama's Regiment at Wiesbaden, where you saw him. I am sure that he is as worthy of your confidence as he commands mine, who knows him intimately since 25 years!

Best thanks for your kind letter & your wishes for New Year, which I heartily reciprocate. May God bless & protect you & your family & grant Peace to your People this is the earnest wish of

Ever your devoted & aff-ate cousin,
friend & ally

WILLY

¹ General F. W. L. Albano von Jacobi, a member of the Kaiser's suite, was at this time Military Plenipotentiary at the Russian Emperor's Court, with a residence in Petrograd.

CHAPTER XVI

ANARCHISTS IN ENGLAND

The Kaiser in letter No. LVI. is very indignant about British toleration of Anarchists, and he thinks that all the Continental Powers should ask the British Government to join them in an international agreement "to fight these beasts." The Kaiser would impose capital punishment on the making of chemicals for bomb purposes, and is of opinion that the right place "for these fiends" is the scaffold or the lunatic asylum.

In the same letter he again vents his spite on the British Fleet, and considers that "their self-invited visit" to Russian waters must be as irritating to the Tsar as a similar visit to German waters was to himself. However, the Kaiser is to have the Fleet "closely watched."

In the following letter he hopes that his brother Prince Henry will be able to show the Tsar the German Fleet, which he proudly states has become more homogeneous.

The reference in letter No. LIV. "to your dear grandfather's death" applies, of course, to King Christian of Denmark, who died on January 29th, 1906. "I of course," says the Kaiser, "intend

going to the funeral." As recent Danish revelations show, he used the occasion to bully and intimidate Denmark on the subject of a rapprochement with Germany.

The unrest in Russia had led to a great exodus of noble families from the Baltic Provinces to Berlin, and the Kaiser is very anxious that the Tsar should foot the bill for the upkeep of "these poor fellows," his officers married to young ladies from those families.

LIV.

Berlin 29/I 1906.

Dearest Nicky

General v. Jacobi¹ brought me your letter & wishes for which best thanks. He was most happy at the kind reception he met at your hands as well as in society. I am glad to hear from him that you are quite well as also are Alix and children. He was most impressed by the good looks & "tenue" the Regiments showed, which were inspected by you, at which ceremony he was allowed to assist. But he was very sorry he cut such a miserable figure at the shooting party, not having his own guns, & being only an indifferent marksman.

The idea of a swaggering "aide-de-camp" from our Colleague "the woodcutters von Fallières"²

¹ The General, as we saw earlier, was one of the mediums for the private diplomacy of the Emperors.

² The Imperial joke remains hidden. M. Fallières had a fortnight before this been elected President of the French Republic.

following about in your suite" caused me unlimited amusement. But besides being awfully funny it is in some respects at least also a useful idea. The more closely France is drawn over to you—provided it succeeds—the more it gets out of mischief. The Moroccan business will as far as I can see come out all right without war.¹ The decisive point is that hitherto no other Power has shown any disposition for eventually lending France armed support, in case she wants to invade Morocco. Without the certainty of armed support France is not likely to risk such an invasion. Some arrangement will ultimately be agreed upon ensuring Peace for all parties concerned with honour assuring at the same time for the trade of the whole world the maintenance of the open Door in Morocco.

That the French refused a loan to Russia² now, has not so much to do with the Moroccan Affair as she has much calmed down since the opening of the Conference of Algeiras, but to the reports of the Jews from Russia—who are the leaders of the Revolt³—to their kinsmen in France who have

¹ The Conference at Algeiras had opened on January 16th, under the presidency of the Duke of Almodovar.

² The new Russian loan of 800,000,000 fr., proposed at this moment, was rejected by M. Rouvier, but the French banks were prepared to advance funds to strengthen the gold reserve of the Imperial Bank.

³ For weeks before this the messages of the *Morning Post* Correspondent in Russia were filled with accounts of the great

the whole Press under their nefarious influence. Berlin is quite full of Russians & noble families fled from the Baltic Provinces. Over 50,000 of your subjects are here. 20,000 about at Konigsberg and other thousands in the small Provincial towns of Prussia, Posen, and Silesia. Especially the Nobles from the Baltic Provinces are in a dire distress, having lost all their castles burnt & their properties pillaged & their forests partly destroyed. Many a baroness has gone in for simple housekeeping in other families, & young comtesses & baronesses have had to enter "Magazins" as simple shopgirls, only to save themselves & their mothers from starving!! Our great landed proprietors have volunteered to harbour some families in their country houses, & even the Empress has taken girls into her seminary to relieve the poor mothers! You have no idea of the terrible loss & distress reigning in the best of your Courland & Livland Nobility. As many of my officers serving in the army have married young ladies from these families, receiving their main means of subsistence from their parents-in-law these poor fellows are also suddenly placed *vis-à-vis de rien*, as they cannot live on their pay. To my opinion many millions will be necessary for reestablishing these poor people & helping to rebuild their destroyed homes, disorder in the Baltic Provinces, to which the Russian revolutionary movement had extended. Riga was in open revolt.

which sums I trust your Government will readily place at their disposal; an order from you to that effect would make an excellent impression in the whole of Europe, & rally the drooping spirits of these lamentable people.

While I am writing these lines I just receive the sudden & quite unexpected news of your dear grandfathers death.¹ What a noble ideal & chivalrous monarch has passed away! Beloved by his family & his subjects who looked upon him as their father! I deeply sympathize with you in this great loss, which we monarchs all feel & deplore, as we have lost one of our best among us! Your poor mother will be in a awful distress, but thankful that she was there to spend the last moments with her adored father! I of course intend going to the funeral.

General Saionzkowsky was presented to me & made an excellent impression upon me; I was glad to be able to congratulate him on the brilliant achievements of my brave Regiment of Viborg, that fought so gallantly for its Emperor and Country.²

Now goodbye dearest Nicky, best love to Alix & the children from

Your aff-ate friend & cousin

WILLY.

¹ King Christian IX. of Denmark died this day. He was the father of the Tsar's mother and of Queen Alexandra.

² General Zaionchkovsky in the Russo-Japanese War commanded the 85th Viborg Infantry Regiment, of which the Kaiser was Honorary Colonel.

LV.

Berlin 6/III 06.

Dearest Nicky

The return of General *à la suite* v. Jacobi to Tsarskos gives me the opportunity of sending these lines through him. They are to express my sincerest & heartfelt thanks for your kind wishes for our silver wedding¹ & for the splendid present you kindly sent us both. They are really most lovely! Lovely in colour & exquisite in workmanship; the chiffres in precious stones making an excellent set off on the soft dark green of the stone. They attracted great attention among our guests & were duly admired. It was most kind of you to think of our old wedding & to take part in our festivities like this. I was most pleased to salute all the deputations you sent me. Especially my brave "Viborgs" were the centre of admirative curiosity; they made a very good impression everywhere & were "feted" as much as possible.

The festivities were most tiring & exciting, but happily Victoria got through pretty well after just having had a sharp attack of influenza.

Since 3 days we have perfect summer here & everybody is out on horseback & on foot, auto or cycle even hundreds are to be seen sitting in the

¹ The Kaiser was married on February 27th, 1881, to Augusta-Victoria, Princess of Slesvig-Holstein. With their silver wedding was celebrated the marriage of their second son, Prince Eitel Friedrich, to the Duchess Sophie Charlotte of Oldenburg.

gardens & on the terraces of the "cafés" drinking their coffee or bier out of doors! I suppose this warm weather will soon reach you too!

With best love to Alix & the babies & once more thanking you for your lovely gift.

I remain

Ever your most devoted & aff-ate
Friend and cousin

WILLY.

LVI.

Neues Palais 14/VI 1906.

Dearest Nicky,

Sincerest thanks for your kind letter Tatischeff brought me & the second one Wladimir gave me today. I fully sympathize with you in these difficult times. The best way to relieve the cares & worries the situation at home causes you, is as you do, to occupy yourself with your fine Guard by inspecting them & speaking to them. It gives you pleasure & gratifies the troops, who will no doubt in serious moments, acknowledge the interest you show them, by proving a loyal trustworthy & keen weapon in the hand of their sovereign. I am glad your Hussars¹ satisfied you, who served in their ranks! It is the same with me here; as I also

¹ "The Emperor's Hussars," one of the regiments of the Tsar's Guard.

have a "*penchant*" for my *Garde Hussars*,¹ whom I commanded for a time. I reviewed them yesterday, before maneuvering the *Guards Cavalry Division*, which was most successful, but like all inspections this year ended in a heavy shower.

I quite agree with your views on the Anarchist question. The attempt² was dastardly & fiendish. The difficulty to cope with the pest of Mankind, is as you rightly observe that in some countries—before all in England—these beasts may live undisturbed & there to plot against the lives of anybody. I am informed³ that the Spanish Prime Minister has charged the Prince of Wales to express the wish of the Spanish nation to H.M. the King Edward VII. that it was deemed necessary he should cause his Government to join the Continental Powers in the serious repression of this murderous sect.

This occurrence shows that the arrangements made by our two Governments for the control of these fellows, have completely miscarried.

¹ The "*Leibgarde Hussars*."

² On May 31st, while the King and Queen of Spain were returning from their wedding in the Church of San Jeronimo el Real, in Madrid, a bomb was thrown at the Royal coach.

³ It is interesting to recall that a few days after this letter was written, King Edward's private secretary sent a communication to a correspondent, giving an absolute denial to the statement appearing in certain newspapers that his Majesty had in conversation with the Prime Minister or other Ministers advocated stronger legal action against anarchists in England.

Because they can live with absolute impunity in London, there mature their murderous designs. The right place for these fiends is the scaffold, sometimes the imprisonment for life in a lunatic asylum. All Continental Powers should send London a joint invitation to ask the English Government to join them by an International agreement to fight these beasts. I should think that it would be possible, by a common consent, in the defence of life & culture, to legally place the fabrication of chemicals for the filling & use of bombs under capital punishment.

The Duma¹ creates most difficult situations for your Government and the circumstances are most trying. But one must hope that after a time both will manage to find means & ways to come to a reasonable *modus vivendi*, so that positive work may be done the welfare of the country.

As I expected your choice fell on Iswolsky,² who will I am sure satisfy you, as a most clever man he will easily guide the course of Russian Foreign politics, along peaceful lines according to your wish. He gave a very sensible answer

¹ The Duma had been opened, with great ceremony, on May 10th, on the eve of which was announced the resignation of Count Witte, by whose labours it had at last emerged. [Its course was troubled from the first, and a few days before this letter was written a correspondent in Petrograd was anticipating a storm, though it might not break until a month or two later.]

² M. Isvolsky succeeded Count Witte as Russian Minister of the Interior.

to Schoen in the Bagdad Railway question so that I hope my Government will be able to continue working with him on the base of mutual confidence arising out of the community of interests.¹ Our interests in this Railway are purely economic & commercial for the welfare of mankind. It represents a concession in full legal form to a German Company, who is building & running it. I can well imagine that the English are, as you say fiddling around you, about Asia,² but as you have decided calmly to await their proposals, it is sure that, if their terms about Central Asia seems acceptable to you, an understanding with them would remove many elements of friction & conflict which would also give me satisfaction.

No doubt everybody will understand that the actual moment chosen by the English Fleet to pay their selfinvited visit³ must be most irritating & inopportune to you & your country & I am fully convinced of your feelings of indignation about it from my feelings about the visit to us

¹ This project, which had been marking time since October, 1904, now began to move forward again. An evidently officially inspired announcement appeared in the Berlin Press on May 21st.

² All the questions at issue between Great Britain and Russia were at this time being examined and discussed by their representatives—steps to the Triple Alliance to come.

³ The projected visit of the Channel Fleet to Sweden, which was paid in August following, had just been announced. We have seen the Kaiser's methods of "having them closely watched."

last year. They will certainly try to strengthen the backs of your ultra liberal party. The fleet on their return journey have announced their visit to Pillau and Travemünde. I shall have them closely watched.

Like you I look forward with great pleasure to our meeting in the end of Summer. As I shall be back in the Baltic in the first days of August I thought to propose to you to meet on the 1 of August new style—if the weather is fine in the roads of Heringsdorf off Swinemünde. The place is very pretty & the communication with the shore for despatches etc. much easier than at Hela.

The kind old Emperor Francis Josef I went to see, was still remarkably fresh, though age has bent him a little, he also was much irritated at the behaviour of his parliament.¹ The hours I spent with him were most agreeable through his warm hearted kindness & chivalry.

I visited a most interesting old-restored-castle Kreuzenstein belonging to the celebrated explorer Count Wilzeck.² It is a marvel of Gothic architecture furniture from the 13th to 15th century most harmonious & instructive.

Tatischeff will tell you of my inspection this spring & the maneuvers of my 2nd Brigade

¹ The Kaiser on June 6th arrived in Vienna on a short visit to the Emperor Francis Joseph at Schönbrunn.

² While there he went to Count Wilczek's Castle at Kreuzenstein, which during the previous thirty years had been restored in accordance with historical data. The Castle had now become practically a museum of Fifteenth Century arms and armour.

showing the new "Regiment." for the 1st time, as well as the evolutions of the Guards Cavalry Division under my Command, which went off exceedingly well.

Wladimir was here & gave me your kind lines, which, as Colonel of the Viborgs made me feel very proud. I once more thank you for the great kindness you showed them, & the honour you gave them by inspecting them; they fully deserved it as they behaved most gallantly. Wladimir also accompanied us to a great cattle show near Berlin & seemed highly amused at the production of prize cows, bulls, pigs, horses, etc. that made a great noise; the thousands of peasants & small proprietors were most jubilant in their loyal demonstrations. Most astonishing progress was shown in the departments of the Electric & Alcoholic motors, as well as the alcoholic gas lamps for the use of the Landed proprietors.

Now goodbye dearest Nicky, God bless & protect you, best love to Alix, & "*au revoir*" at Swinemünde, where we shall try to be a merry company.

Ever your most aff-ate friend & cousin

WILLY.

LVII.

7/II, 1907.

Dearest Nicky,

Hintze¹ is about to leave and this affords me the opportunity of sending you these lines through him. My warmest wishes accompany you in the New Year hoping that your steady work for your country and the welfare of the people may succeed in calming the minds heated by discussion and mislead by unwarrantable agitation I hope that, if wiser counsels prevail with your subjects this year, and they behave themselves we shall be able to meet on the "waters" somewhere and that Henry² will be happy to show you the Fleet under his Flag. I think you will find a certain progress in its development since 1901 near Danzig old types having been eliminated and new ones added so as to render the whole fleet more homogenous.

With best love to Alix and the children, whose photos pleased me immensely, specially of the boy and wishing you Gods blessing believe me dear Nicky

Ever your most affate cousin and friend

WILLY.

¹ Captain von Hintze was a member of the Kaiser's suite, attached to the person of the Tsar.

² Prince Henry of Prussia, the Kaiser's brother. In the previous September (1906) he had been appointed to the chief command of the German battle-fleet. The greater homogeneity of the fleet here referred to was due to filling up the different classes with new ships to type as these were completed.

CHAPTER XVII

MISGIVINGS

Letter No. LX. is highly dramatic, for it is now clear that the Kaiser realises that the great plot for the isolation of England, which has been revealed stage by stage throughout the correspondence, has come to naught (see Introduction).

He is pleased with the results of his visit to England, and retails some absurd gossip which he alleges he picked up in London about Japanese designs.

LVIII.

28/XII 07.

Dearest Nicky

With all my heart warmest wishes for 1908. God bless and protect you Alix and the children, and let me hope of having the pleasure of meeting you again.

By my visit to England¹ I think I have removed many courses of misunderstanding and of distrust, so that the atmosphere is cleared and

¹ The German Emperor and Empress arrived here on November 11th, 1907. The latter left again on the 18th, when their State visit ended, but the Kaiser remained in this country until December 12th. Time and occasion thus favoured him for gathering his "secret information."

the pressure on the safety valve relieved. As a piece of news only *quite private and confidential for you personally*. I found the British people very nervous about the Japanese whom they begin to fear and mistrust. The sailing of the American Pacific fleet has angered London highly as they tried everything in their power to hinder it.¹ London is afraid of an encounter between Japan and America, because they must take sides with one of them, as it will be a question of Race, not of Politics only *Yellow* versus *White*. The dropping of Japan would immediately entail the loss of India; which the Japanese are quietly undermining, revolutionizing etc. The Japanese have foreseen this development and are preparing for it. *Perhaps* they will *first* attack India and leave Philippines alone. British Naval and Army officers spoke openly to me and my officers of their disgust at the "Yellow" alliance with Japan, whom they hate.

In this state of feelings judge what an effect Count Okuma's speech a few days ago has made! ²

¹ Somewhat suddenly the American Pacific Fleet, after being inspected by President Roosevelt, sailed from Hampton Roads on December 16th, 1907, on a cruise that extended to Australia, Japan, Malta, and Gibraltar. On its return, February 22nd, 1909, it was again reviewed by the President, off Virginia Cape.

² Made before the Kobe Chamber of Commerce, and reported in British Press on December 23rd, 1907. Its purport was that Japan must not be content with the markets of India and the South Seas, good as these were, but must extend her competition to Europe. The passage

The action is that of a Shimose shell in London ! Now their newspapers have for the first time used the term of "Yellow Peril" from *my picture*, which is coming true.¹ A German Gentleman just back from Mexico reported to me having himself counted 10,000 Japanese men in the in it suggesting the "Shimose shell" figure is doubtless this :

"You must not be content with foreign vessels. You can go everywhere in Japanese vessels. Any place where the Japanese flag flies may be regarded as Japan. In this sense the Japanese dominion extends to the Pacific, the Chinese waters, the Indian Ocean, and Korea. You can go everywhere with ease and pleasure under the protection of the Japanese Fleet. Being oppressed by the Europeans the 300,000,000 of India are looking for Japan's protection. They have commenced to boycott European merchandise. If, therefore, the Japanese let the chance slip by and do not go to India the Indians will be disappointed. If one will not take gifts from heaven, heaven may send one misfortune. From old times India has been a land of treasure. Alexander the Great obtained there treasure sufficient to load a hundred camels and Mahomet and Attila also obtained riches from India. Why should the Japanese not stretch out their hands towards that country now that the people are looking to the Japanese? The Japanese ought to go to India, the South Ocean, and other parts of the world."

¹ The Kaiser's picture we have already heard of, in letter No. VI. Needless to say, he held no copyright in the term "Yellow Peril." The question of Asiatic migration to America and consequent friction between the United States and Japan, especially in view of the tour of the American Navy, was being much discussed, not least of all in the German Press. The *Morning Post* strongly deprecated alarmist interpretations of the situation, any more than of Japan's intentions in regard to India. Baron Okuma, it pointed out, was an ex-Premier, who had held brief office, and was not, when he spoke, in a responsible position.

plantations in South Mexico, all in Military Jackets with brass buttons.¹ After work at sundown they all assemble under sergeants and officers who are disguised as simple labourers, in squads and detachements and drill and exercise with staffs of wood, which he observed very often, when they thought they were unobserved. They are Japanese reservists who have hidden arms with them, and intended as army corps to seize the Panama Canal and to cut off communication on land with America. It is not improbable that England will have to send out a squadron to the Pacific, which they are very loth to do. Meanwhile American and British Journals are having a little friendly nosepulling among each other, which shows the nervousness of the London Press.

This is my *secret* information for *you personally*, so that you may have time to arrange for your plans it is sure information and good, as you well know by now that I never gave you wrong one. The mainpoint is to have ones eyes open and be prepared. The development may be slow, yet incidents may create an unexpected and sudden outburst before the question has ripened, as will sometimes happen. It is imposing to observe how well the Japanese prepare

¹ These Military Jackets in South Mexico were made in Germany. It is specifically mentioned, in the Mexican Census returns of 1900, that the only Yellow population in the country was Chinese. The Census of 1910 revealed the presence in the whole of Mexico of 2,276 Japanese all told.

themselves for an emergency! They are going in for the whole of Asia, carefully preparing their blows and against the *white Race in general!* Remember my picture, its coming true! If France sides with England in this affair, Saigon and Annam are gone!

WILLY.

LIX.

Wilhelmshöhe, 18/VIII, 08.

Dearest Nicky

Will you kindly do me the favour of kindly accepting the first proofs of my photos in the new Russian uniforms. They have not yet been published, and I hope your scrutinizing eye would find any faults with the turn out.

Uncle Bertie was all sunshine at Cronberg and in very good humour.¹ He intends visiting Berlin officially with Aunt Alix next year, date to be fixed. He also talked about Turkey, giving to understand that she was best left alone, to organize herself and to reform Macedonia herself, so that the Powers were able for the time to drop the projected reforms, which seems to relieve him visibly.

I hope your trip is favoured by good weather,

¹ King Edward was this year again at Marienbad, and he had met the Kaiser at Cronberg a few days earlier.

whilst we have incessant pouring rain here,
with best love to Alix.

Every your affate friend and cousin

WILLY.

LX.

Hubertusstock,¹ 8/I, 09.

Dearest Nicky

Many thanks for your kind letter of Dec. 25th which you sent me through Tatischeff. I was much pleased to hear from you, and my wife and I both thank you most sincerely for your kind wishes for the New year.

You are quite right in saying that the old year was an eventful one. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegowina was a genuine surprise for everybody, but particularly so for us as we were informed about Austrias intentions even later than you.² I think it my duty to draw

¹ A Royal shooting lodge 30 miles north of Berlin.

² By proclamation issued on October 7th, Bosnia-Herzegovina was declared annexed to Austria-Hungary. At the same time was announced the "renunciation" in favour of Turkey of the Sanjak of Novi Bazar. Here Germany's game in 1914 is anticipated: she, poor innocent, had been kept in the dark by her Ally, loyalty to whom, however, compels her to stand by the *fait accompli*! Earlier in the year Baron von Aehrenthal had announced his projected "Sandjack Railway" from Ugatz, on the Bosnian frontier, to Mitrovitza, in Macedonia, completing Austro-Hungarian communications with the Balkans. Over the latter Russia was fretting. The annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which aroused the anger of Europe, caused

your attention to this, considering that Germany has been accused of having pushed Austria to take this step. This allegation is absurd; and as untrue as it was in the case of the Sandjack Railway. I am glad to see by your letter that people in Russia begin to realise this now. The fact is that once Austria had taken this step without previously consulting us hesitation as to the course we had to follow as loyal allies was out of the question. We could not side with our opponents. You will be the first to approve of this loyalty of ours.

But this does not mean that we intend to drop our old friendly relations with Russia. I am even more firmly convinced than ever, that Germany and Russia should be as closely united as possible; their union would form a powerful stronghold for the maintenance of Peace and of monarchical institutions. You know my view in that respect that my friendship is loyal and sincere I was able to prove to you by facts; when during the period of adversities Russia had to pass through recently I took grave responsibility on myself for your sake.¹

a ferment in Serbia that threatened to issue in war. This was "the present crisis" the Kaiser alludes to in his letter. The Skupschtina, the Serbian Parliament, held sessions (frequently secret) on the first days of the year. Apparently "these very small people" were especially an "awful nuisance" at the sitting of January 2nd.

¹ The Kaiser here refers doubtless to his efforts to get the Tsar out of the mess into which he had intrigued him by the war with Japan.

Valuing as I do friendly relations between our two countries I consider it all, the more important, that whatever might injure them should be removed. You wont I hope mind my telling you quite frankly what I think on that subject. Recently we have been represented as resenting and showing uneasiness about your agreement with England concerning Central Asia. The same rumours are circulated about the visit Uncle Bertie paid to you at Reval.¹ All nonsense! We understand perfectly that Russia for the present must avoid getting into a conflict with Great Britain, and that for this reason she is bent on smoothing away actual points of controversy.

Apart from this you have repeatedly given me the formal assurance, that you would not enter upon any agreement with England of a more general nature. I have your word what else should I require? We are quite as anxious as you to improve our relations with England. I am looking forward to the visit Uncle Bertie is going to pay me next month in Berlin not only because I am gratified to have him and Aunt Alix over here, but also because I expect the visit to have useful results for the Peace of the World.²

¹ King Edward, with Queen Alexandra and Princess Victoria, had met the Tsar at Reval on June 9th, 1908, the visit being widely commented on as the first of an English Sovereign to Russia. On this occasion the Tsar referred to the Anglo-Russian Agreement of August 11th.

² The visit to Berlin was paid on February 10th-13th following.

No my dear Nicky neither your agreement with England about Central Asia nor your meeting at Reval has produced any uneasiness or disappointment in Germany. The cause is quite a different one. It is the patent fact that for the last two years Russian Policy has been gradually drawing away from us more and more, evolving always closer toward a combination of powers unfriendly to us. The Triple Entente between France-Russia and England is being talked of by the whole world as an accomplished fact.¹ English and French papers miss no opportunity of representing this alleged "Triple-entente" as being directed against Germany, and only too often the Russian Press chimes in joining the chorus. On the other hand in many cases of late Russian policy has shown mistrust in German policy, for instance in Persia and China, a mistrust entirely unwarranted. As for other questions in which we are interested, such as the Bagdad Railway, where we expected to count on Russia, she in her policy gave us a wide berth.² It is surprising consequently that

¹ So far as Russia's association in it was concerned, the Triple Entente came into existence in 1909. Here the Kaiser is aware of the shadow which that event cast before it. M. Isvolsky, one of the instruments in fashioning the Entente, had a year or two earlier been singled out by the Kaiser as a tool in his designs.

² Throughout this year Europe was concerned with the international aspect of the Bagdad Railway, further stages in the construction of which Germany was busy promoting.

a certain estrangement should have grown up between our two countries ?

I need not assure you that all these questions impress me very keenly, and I think it my duty to draw your attention to the situation as it really is and to the reasons which lead up to it before it be too late.

The tendency of Russian policy to prefer to lean on England and France was particularly in the present crisis. Your Government approached mine about the Bosnian question only after a programme for an intended Conference had been drawn up and agreed to in Paris and London. This programme was published in the French Press *before* being communicated to us. French Papers as well as English and Russian raising a jubilant chorus about this achievement of the new "Triple-entente" as matters stood when Iswolsky came to Berlin, my Government had no alternative but the strictest reserve with regard to several important points forming part of the Russian wishes. We could not urge our ally to consent to a programme, which we knew she would not accept, quite apart from the consideration that the programme, had been drawn up without us; our cooperation having been dispensed with in a manner that was judged by the outer world as an intended demonstration.

Had another course been adopted we would have been able to suggest to your Government *not* to launch this programme. We would have suggested preliminary confidential negotiations

between the cabinets, such negotiations affording us more than one opportunity of rendering valuable services to Russia. Had Russia consulted us in the right time, matters would not be in the awful muddle they are in now nor in such a critical state. Under the present circumstances I dont quite see, what I could do, except giving words of moderation to both sides, which I already have done. I also feel it my duty to tell you quite frankly that I am under the impression that your views about Austria's intentions are too pessimistic, and that you are over anxious, more than is necessary. We here at any rate have not the slightest doubt that Austria is not going to *attack* Servia. This would not at all be like the Emperor Francis Joseph, who is wise and judicious and such a venerable Gentleman. Nor do we believe that Aehrenthal harbours any such plans. Of course the small Balkan States must necessarily be prudent and loyal and avoid all provocations and put a stop to warlike preparations. These small States are an awful nuisance! *Quantités négligeables!* The slightest encouragement from any quarter makes them frantic. The speeches that were made in the Skupschtina on the 2d made a very bad impression upon me on account of their revolutionary tendency. Six years ago these very small people were looked upon with disgust and horror by the whole world as the murderers of their King!

I do hope with all my heart that notwith-

standing numerous and serious difficulties have to be surmounted a peaceful solution will be arrived at; anything I can do in that direction will certainly be done. Take my word for it! Hintze¹ will be the bearer of this letter and will I hope find you all in health and happiness, to whom I once more wish that the Lord may give you Peace and prosperity and happiness in the New Year.

Victoria and I send best love to Alix; so glad my Xmas presents were a success. Believe me dearest Nicky, ever

Your
true and devoted cousin and friend

WILLY.

LXI.

Neues Palais, 3/IV, 09.

Dearest Nicky,

Will you kindly accept for yourself and for dear Alix an Easteregg from us as a token of undiminished love and friendship.² The one

¹ Von Hintze we have already seen engaged in conveying this correspondence.

² The Palace of Peterhof, with its twenty-two fountains, was built by Peter the Great in imitation of Versailles, and, though considerably changed since then, still retains the main features of the original. Charlottenhof, in the Sans-Souci Park, in Potsdam, is a country house transformed into an Italian villa. The "round temple of the 'Freundschaftstempel,'" in the same park, the symbolism

with the Greek portico and fountain represents a part of Charlottenhof, which was copied in the gardens of Peterhof and is for Alix. The round temple is the "Freundschaftstempel" built by Fred: the Great in the park of Sans-souci and dedicated to all great historical pairs of men who kept their friendship unseveringly down to death, or who died for it. This may serve you as a symbol for our relation to each other as I look upon it.

Easter is now nearing and I want to once more thank you sincerely for the loyal and noble way in which you kinly led the way to help to preserve peace. It is thanks to your highminded and unselfish initiative that Europe has been spared the horrors of a universal war, and that the Holy Week will remain unsullied by human blood, which would have been spilt. You may celebrate your Easter with the elating knowledge that everywhere in Europe thousands of families are on their knees thanking the Lord for Peace and praying for his blessing on your head.

I intend to leave for Corfu¹ after Easter passing through Venice on our way down. How

of which the Kaiser turned to his purpose, was erected by Gontard for Frederick the Great in memory of his sister, the Margravine of Bayreuth.

¹ Overlooking the sea near Gasturi, on the Greek island of Corfu, stands the Achilleion, a magnificent palace, built by the late Empress of Austria, and in 1907 acquired by the Kaiser. French marines landed on the island in 1916. The seafront of the Kaiser's property was believed to have been used as a base by German and Austrian submarines.

I wish I could show you this lovely spot, a little Paradise on Earth! No tourists and easily reached from the sea direct! A happy Easter and best wishes to Alix and the boy.—

Ever your devoted friend

WILLY.

P.S. On my home voyage I shall probably visit Uncle Arthur at Malta.¹

¹ The Kaiser carried out this intention, and he and the Duke of Connaught, who then held the command of the Eastern Mediterranean, met at Malta on May 10th.

CHAPTER XVIII

ONSLAUGHT ON THE PRESS

The trouble between Bulgaria and Turkey had been settled in Petrograd in April, 1909, and in a letter sent from Corfu a month later the Kaiser congratulates the Tsar on his efforts to secure peace, and also takes to himself a good share of the credit.

He expected that both Monarchs would consequently win universal applause, but "to my regret and astonishment" the Press in general "has behaved in the basest way against me." Whereupon the Kaiser lets himself go on the Press generally—on "the scoundrels who do such dirty work," on "tarnished and gutterlike sources," on "foul and filthy lies," and so on. The Kaiser, however, adds, "personally I am totally indifferent to newspaper gossip."

He also has another grievance, for just as he was about to set forth for Corfu for a quiet holiday a military revolution against the Young Turks broke out in Constantinople. "We poor rulers, it seems, are not entitled to holidays like other simple mortals."

In letter No. LXIII. he refers to the confirmation of his daughter, and in letters Nos. LXV. and LXVI. it is clear that the Kaiser's arrangement for attaching a

special aide-de-camp to the Tsar's suite is not meeting with much success, either from the point of view of the Tsar or the aide-de-camp himself.

The letters below illustrate his natural eye for landscape beauties.

LXII.

Corfu, 8/V, 09.

Dearest Nicky

As Hintze is returning for your birthday I gladly seize the opportunity to send you these lines.¹ With all my heart I wish you many happy returns. May Heaven bless and protect you and your wife and children. May you be successful in your work for your country and the welfare of your people.

A few weeks ago when affairs threatened to become dangerous your wise and courageous decision secured peace for all the nations.² I

¹ Letter No. LXVI. shows that the Aide-de-Camp, Captain von Hintze, has lost the confidence of the Tsar, to whose person he was attached. As a note to that letter shows, he was to go far.

² The affairs which had threatened to become dangerous were connected with Bulgaria's outstanding compensation to Turkey, the negotiations over which were impeded by friction between Constantinople and Sofia on associate questions. Mobilisation and movements of troops by both Powers caused Europe to be apprehensive of fresh conflict, but trouble was averted by an offer from Russia for the capitalisation of the Russian indemnity for the war of 1876. The solution thus effected was ratified on April 19th, three weeks before the present letter. At the same time Bulgaria's independence, proclaimed by Turkey the previous year, was formally recognised by all the signatories to the Berlin Treaty.

was most gratified that through my helping cooperation you were able to fulfil your task.

I very naturally expected that you and I would win universal applause, and I venture to think that we have earned the gratitude of all well meaning people. But to my regret and astonishment a great many blame us both instead, especially the Press in general has behaved in the basest way against me. By some papers I am being credited with being the Author of annexation and am accused among other rot and nonsense of having humiliated Russia by my Peace proposal! Of course you know better. Yet the fact must be taken note of that the papers mostly create public opinion. Some of them err through their ignorance and lack of correct information; they scarcely see farther than their own noses length. But more dangerous and at the same time more loathesome is that part of the press which writes what it is paid for. The scoundrels who do such dirty work, are in no fear of starving. They will always continue to incite the hostility of one nation against the other, and when at last through their hellish devices, they have brought about the much desired collision, they placidly sit down and watch the fight which they organised, well assured that the profit will be theirs no matter what the issue may be. In this way in 99 cases out of hundred what is vulgarly called "public opinion" is a mere forgery.

As Sovereigns who are responsible to God for

the welfare of the Nations entrusted to our care it is our duty therefore to closely study the genesis and development of "public opinion" before we allow it to influence our actions. Should we find that it takes its origin from the tarnished and gutterlike sources of the above named infamous press our duty will and must oblige us to energetically correct it and resist it.

Personally I am totally indifferent to newspaper gossip, but I cannot refrain from a certain feeling of anxiety, that if not contradicted at once, the foul and filthy lies which are freely circulated about my policy and my country, will tend to create bitterness between our two people by virtue of their constant uncontradicted repetition. Public opinion wants clear information and leading.

When I set out for Corfu I was looking forward to a quiet holiday. But alas it was not to be! Another revolution broke out at Constantinople.¹ We poor rulers it seems are not entitled to holidays like other simple mortals. The troubles in the East made me very anxious for the time and still so so.

The East is a regular nightmare a "*boîte à surprises*." I would be most grateful if you could kindly write me what your opinion is

¹ The Kaiser had not reached Corfu when, on April 13th, the revolution broke out in Constantinople which led to the resignation of Hilmi Pasha, and the appointment of Tewfik Pasha in his place, as Grand Vizier, the brief overthrow of the Committee of Union and Progress, and ultimately their return and (April 27th) the deposition of Abd-ul-Hamid.

about the general outlook in Turkey. An exchange of our views is urgent and necessary lest fresh events should again take us by surprise.

The events of the last year¹ are a vivid proof of the absolute necessity of doing so; as they clearly show that it would have been most profitable if we had immediately communicated with each other at the outbreak of the crisis.

If you and I join in open and loyal cooperation for the maintenance of Peace—which is my most fervent wish—I am thoroughly convinced that Peace will not only be maintained, but not even be troubled. There is not a shadow of doubt that Peace guarantees the vital interests, the security of welfare of our People, as well as of our dynasties.

Will you kindly accept as birthday present a watercolour sketch made by a clever Corfiote painter representing the “Achilleon”² seen from the olivegrove at the foot of the hill. We spent a lovely time here under a blue sky, surrounded by sweet scents and the marvellous display of any amount of flowers, spending the whole day nearly out of doors, sitting out on the marble terraces in the shade of fine palmtrees. I hope that once I may be able to show you this paradise when you chance to be yachting in the Mediterranean. We made many charming

¹ All that followed the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary.

² The Kaiser's Palace in Corfu, on the beauties of which paradise he here descants.

excursions *par Auto* with teapicnies in the country, quite delightful. The island is quite lovely, and the people quiet, simple and very polite, and no tourists !

To-day we leave with a heavy heart on our return journey to Malta, Brindise Pola.¹ We saw much of the King and Queen,² and I had the great pleasure of seeing my sister³ very often.

Now goodbye dearest Nicky, best love to Alix and the children, especially my boy, God bless and protect you, au revoir I hope and believe me
Ever Your most affate and devoted friend
and cousin

WILLY

¹ When earlier in the year the Kaiser learned that King Edward was to visit Malta, and spend some time in the Royal yacht in the Mediterranean, he sought to arrange a meeting at Corfu or at Malta. King Edward, however, had fixed a meeting with the King of Italy at Baia, and also had entered into engagements of importance at home. He could not, therefore, accede to the Kaiser's wishes. Now, in May, the German Emperor and Empress visited Malta (10th), where the Duke and Duchess of Connaught received them ; Brindisi (12th), where they met the King and Queen of Italy ; and Pola (13th). From there they went on to Vienna. The meeting of the Kaiser with the Emperor Francis Joseph there took a State ceremonial form that had not originally been contemplated, and there was an interchange of telegrams between the heads of the Triple Alliance.

² The King and Queen of the Hellenes.

³ The wife of Constantine ("Tino"), then Crown Prince of Greece.

LXIII.

Neues Palais, 20/X, 09.

Dearest Nicky,

As Tatischeff leaves Berlin to accompany you during your journey¹ through our country I send you a short line by way of a salute. May your journey be pleasant and your stay in Italy agreeable and favoured by weather as we are here.

Our Maneuvres² went off very well and were most successful as he will have reported to you. Discipline and marching powers of the Infantry very exceptional and brilliant. The country was interesting but most difficult being very hilly and partly wooded. The fieldkitchens copied from your models have proved most practical and were freely used! A very stirring moment for the spectators at the last day of the manoeuvres was the appearance of the Zeppelin airship accompanied by the military airship, which manoeuvred around it.³

¹ The reference is to the visit of the Tsar later in the month to Italy, when he was received by King Victor Emmanuel at Racconigi. Attended by their Ministers, the two Monarchs discussed various international questions.

² At Morgentheim, in Würtemberg, from September 13th to 17th. The Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the Earl of Lonsdale, Mr. Winston Churchill, and General Sir Bruce Hamilton were among those attending them.

³ The airship referred to was the "Zeppelin III," which set out on the morning of the 17th from Frankfort for Morgentheim, a distance of about 200 miles. She met with a slight mishap over the manoeuvre ground in trying to find her bearings in a fog, but the defects were rectified and she returned to Frankfort the same evening.

My hunting stay in Rominten was favoured by such an exceptionally fine summer weather as we have not enjoyed for a long time. I killed 21 Stags among them 6 of first class. The St. Johns hospital which I built in the small frontier-town of Kittkehmen (opposite Wyschtynez)¹ has answered very well and during my inspection I saw several Russian patients we are able to care for. I am glad to hear that on account of the newly endowed Röntgen-Ray Cabinet, which I dedicated to the Hospital they have a good number of Russian patients who come there to be "durchleuchtet" (X-rayed) and we have done lots of good. You kindly sent a sum through Stremankoff the Governor of Suwalki,² who kindly came and inspected the Hospitals for which I beg you to accept my warmest thanks. He followed my invitation to Rominten and dined with us; he is very nice, quite an agreeable man, and keeps "gute Nachbarschaft" (on friendly terms) with the Russian Collegues over the frontier, who are *en rapport* with him. I thought you would be pleased to know what a capable and good "*représentant*" you have on this part of your frontier, which I regularly visit, as he is universally respected by my people.

¹ Szittkehmen and Wyschtyten, both on the frontier near the Kaiser's hunting lodge of Rominten, the former in East Prussia, the other in Russia.

² Pierre Petrovitch Stremoukhow, Councillor of State, and Governor of Souwalki, in the north-east corner of Russian Poland.

2 days ago my daughter¹ was confirmed in the Friedenskirche, and she pleased everybody by the brave way she passed the ordeal of reading her "confession" out to the community all people were deeply moved and I was very proud of her. For she showed a depth of feeling, and a seriousness in dealing with the problem of life and Religion, which deeply impressed the assembled clergy; the more so as she wrote it quite alone, forbidding anyone to help her.

The splendid summer still continues all the roses are out and the flowerbeds full of colour like in August! The enclosed card corresponds exactly to the light of this evening.

With best wishes believe me dearest Nicky ever your most devoted cousin and friend

WILLY.

LXIV.

Berlin 11/I, 10.

Dearest Nicky

Many thanks for your very kind letter with the photos Henry² brought me, which pleased me much. What an excellent idea of yours making a two hours march in a private's kit and finding

¹ Princess Victoria Louise, born 1892, who in 1913 married the Duke of Brunswick.

² Prince Henry of Prussia, the Kaiser's brother.

out for yourself what it means to carry such a load in the field! I am very glad to hear that you were satisfied with the appearance and behaviour of my deputations for poor Uncle Micha's¹ funeral. Thank you so much for the kind reception you gave them. They were very grateful for the permission to do duty on guard near his bier.

Henry faithfully repeated all the messages you entrusted him with for me. I entirely share your views. I can perfectly understand that developments in the Far East are absorbing your attention.²

The communication made to him about your decision to withdraw 4 Army Corps from our frontier has given me great satisfaction.³ The more so as Henry told me, that in informing him of your decision you referred in the heartiest terms to the traditional friendship of our 2 countries and to their brotherhood in arms established a century ago. You well know how I always had and will have these sacred relations at heart, and I need not tell you how deeply gratified I am at your kind and touching words.

I hope this letter will reach you on New

¹ Grand Duke Michael Nicolaievitch, the Tsar's great-uncle.

² There were numerous international complications at this time arising out of Railways administration and construction in Manchuria and elsewhere in the Far East.

³ The Kaiser was always very much afraid of the Russian forces on the western Russian frontier, and Ludendorff's book shows that his fears were not groundless.

Years day and I seize this opportunity of renewing to you and Alix the best wishes for the happy New Year for all of you God grant.

I hope to again hear from you as soon as you will be able to finally fix the date for our meeting in German waters. Henry suggested that he thought the beginning of August on your and my return from Norway would suit you best? What a pleasure the idea of seeing you dearest Nicky again!

Best love to Alix and the children, the boy in particular, and believe me Ever your true and devoted friend and cousin

WILLY.

LXV.

Neues Palais.

Dearest Nicky

Allow me to lay before you confidentially a matter of importance to me.

It is the question of whether you would perhaps care to see a change in the person of the Aide-de-Camp, who has the honour of being attached to your person from here. As at our former meeting you always spoke very highly of your appreciation of Capt. v. Hintze's qualities, and that he fully enjoyed your confidence, I do not desire to take any steps before having heard from you, or to act without your approval.

Please let me know quite unrestrainedly and

frankly what you think about this matter. Should you think it desirable for me to replace Hintze, I would first communicate with you about the choice of his successor.

Your wishes in this respect are of the highest importance to me, as I consider it an absolute necessity, that the officer, who is attached by me to your person should command your fullest confidences.

I am glad to hear from the Chancellor that he is having a satisfactory exchange of views on different questions with Sassonoff,¹ which may be settled to mutual satisfaction.

We are still thinking of the kind visit you payed us here and hope that the homeward journey did not fatigue A'ix too much.

Best love to her and the children from your devoted cousin and friend

WILLY.

LXVI.

Neues Palais, 24/XII, 1910.

Dearest Nicky

I am most grateful for your frank answer concerning Hintze.² I learn with deep regret

¹ The well-known Russian Foreign Minister and friend of the Allies during the War.

² This Captain von Hintze afterwards became the well-known Admiral. He made a much talked of journey to Peking during the war, and was later appointed Foreign

from your letter that he no longer enjoys your confidence, I have therefore decided to recall him.

As his successor I would propose sending Major Gen: *à la suite* von Laurenstein at present in command of a Brigade of infantry in Hannover. He was my personal Aide-de-Camp before taking over his command. You will probably remember him from the time he was milit: attaché to St. Petersburg; he also had the honour of accompanying your army to the war, and as I hear he was most popular with your officers. He is a most capable soldier and altogether most reliable and trustworthy. He writes a splendid German style, and were consequently member of 3 committees who set on the Reform of the Regiments of our Infantry, Artillery and Cavalry, all three having emanated from his pen.

I place unlimited confidence in him and in the hopes of your approval to my proposal look forward to your answer.

I had Osten-Sacken¹ for lunch the other day. His health seems perfect and he was in high spirits. I am so glad you made him a knight of St. Andrew and I very much appreciate your most friendly and sympathetic allusion to the

Secretary after Kühlmann's fall. Tirpitz was a great believer in Hintze, and always thought that he might have been the means of securing a separate peace with Russia. Altogether an able and energetic man.

¹ Russian Ambassador at Berlin.

relations of our two countries in the letter which you addressed to the dear old gentleman on this occasion.

I got some charming cards from Alix with the children as a group please thank her from me for them. I send you a "*couteau de chasse*" and to Alix a "*saladière*" for the zakouska table, made in my Majolikafactory,¹ and mounted in silver in Dresden.

With the best wishes for a happy prosperous New Year, which may be one of Peace, and much love to Alix and the children I remain

Ever your devoted friend and cousin

WILLY.

¹ The Royal factory at Meissen, a few miles west of Dresden, until 1863 in the fortress of Albrechtsburg, and thereafter nearer the city.

CHAPTER XIX

THE AIDE-DE-CAMP COMEDY

The concluding letters of the correspondence contain in themselves ample proof of the failure of the Kaiser's great design for making Russia his catspaw in order to secure for Germany the mastery of Europe. High politics, great issues of diplomacy and strategy, schemes for mighty combinations, give place to family gossip, Teutonic jokes, and rhapsodies about Corfu.

In letter No. LXVII., however, there is a reference to "Uncle Bertie" and his anxiety about the possibility of closer friendship between the three Empires of Germany, Russia, and Austria-Hungary, but its chastened tone is in striking contrast with the flamboyant utterances in previous letters.

LXVII.

Corfu, 21/IV, 1911.

Dearest Nicky,

As your Easter is approaching I beg to be allowed to send you my warmest Easterwishes through these lines. It is a time in which one always passes in review ones acts and thoughts, before one goes to the Communion, and at this

and after it one goes back into one life with fresh resolutions and reaffirmed convictions. To these latter ones I reckon our relations to each other and our firm friendship for one another which were so happily confirmed at Wolfsgarten and at Potsdam.¹ You may always count on me and my faithful interest in you and your family and your country.

We had a lovely time here amid flowers, scent, blue sky and sun. Only in the week before last it was cold and rainy. We were greatly surprised and interested in the quite unexpected discovery, by a chance experimental digging, of quite enormous sculptures belonging as it seems to an antique Temple which dates as far back as the 6th and 7th century b.Chr.² I spent several

¹ During his visit to Germany the previous year the Tsar paid a visit to Potsdam (November 4th-5th), and at the same time M. Sazonoff, then Russian Foreign Minister, had a conversation with the German Chancellor, Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, at Berlin. On November 11th the Kaiser paid a return visit to Schloss Wolfsgarten, near Darmstadt, where the Russian Emperor was living.

² In the course of excavations at the village of Garitza or Kastrades, in Corfu, the buried ruins of one of the Corycyeian temples, probably dating from the beginning of the 6th century B.C., were brought to light. On April 12th, 1911, a few days before this letter was written, sculptures were discovered, representing the battles between Zeus and the Giants. The Kaiser, who all day watched the operations under a blazing sun and without interval for food, exclaimed in his excitement: "Here has been brought to light one of the greatest antiquities of all time." On later days he spent long hours watching the diggers, among whom he frequently distributed largesse, and Queen Alexandra visited the

days baskin in the sun and looking at the appearance of the different objects, which was very exciting and would have amused you immensely.

I send you enclosed some photos from our house and garden, with the statue of Achilles I caused to be placed on the Terrace. Besides I enclose an article recently published in the German Press, written by an intimate friend of Uncle Bertie, an English Politician; with the intention to persuade the Germans to think better of Uncles policy than they do now. His name is not known. As you will see for yourself, it is very striking the greatest anxiety which governed Uncle for the future of England, was the possibility of the closer friendship between the 3 Empires (Germany, Russia, Austria), which he regarded as dangerous for England, and which he consequently tried to inhibit by all means in his power. That is the explanation for the phrase perpetually used by the English Press "Balance of Powers in Europe"¹ i.e. keep the 3 Emperors apart, or we are lost, for they

scene with the Greek Royal family. A concession of all rights in the excavations was granted by the King of the Hellenes to the Kaiser, on condition that the "finds" did not leave the island.

¹ As the English Press has never wearied in pointing out, England claims no patent for the "Balance of Powers in Europe," any more than for the Law of Gravitation. In the inevitable groupings of the Powers throughout European history she has always placed herself with the weakest to redress the balance against such schemes of Alliance as the Kaiser's.

would assemble the whole European Continent around them and that is against English interests.

I go to London for Grandmamas unweiling,¹ at Georgy's invitation I hope to find out more about this—

With best love to Alix and all I remain

Ever your devoted cousin and friend,

WILLY.

LXVIII.

Wilhelmshöhe, 8/VIII, 1911.

Dearest Nicky

I am sorry that I am again compelled to approach you with a request relating to Gen. von Lauenstein, who has the honour of being attached to your august person. When I chose him for his post—with your approval—he immediately drew my attention to the fact that his wife was of very delicate health. I know her personally and am aware of the fact. Yet I prevailed upon him to go to his post, as you had written so very kindly about him.

She now has just had her 3rd baby, which has so much affected her health, that the doctors have all agreed, that it is quite out of the question, that she could stand the climate of St. Petersburg. Accordingly Lauenstein has now again remarked

¹ The Kaiser was present at the unveiling of Queen Victoria's statue in the Mall on May 16th following. His visit lasted until May 21st.

his request to be relieved of his post. I have regretfully consented, seeing that it is impossible to exact from him to lead a life permanently detached from his family.

I feel assured that you will approve of my decision taken under such serious considerations.

I propose to send as his successor Lieut. Gen. of my suite Count Dohna-Schlobitten, now in command of the Guards Cavalry Division. I dare say you remember my presenting him to you during your last visit to Potsdam—which left with us such pleasant recollections. He was then about to join my son for his trip to India, and would have been on his staff during his stay at Zarskoje¹ if the original itinerary of the journey had been carried out.

Dohna is altogether a genuine Cavalry man—*Frontsoldat*—a first rate horseman, passionate rider and sportsman and all around man of the world. He has always been popular with everybody in his different employments; as Captain in the 1st Dragoon guards, later as Colonel of my Hussars of the Guard then as Brigadier, and then as Leader of the Guards Cavalry Division. Last not least he won every officers esteem and sympathy in India; so much so that the Commander in Chief of the Forces there has invited him to the Coronation Durbar to which I granted him leave. He will I trust on his return be able to give you vivid descriptions of the unique festivities and their unrivalled oriental splendor. His wife

¹ Tsarskoe.

is good looking, most sociable and an old friend of mine from long standing. She enjoys an excellent position in the Berlin Court Society.

Dohna has my entire confidence, and I trust my choice will meet with your approval. We are deeply distressed by poor Kneesebeck's sudden and untimely death.¹ He was private secretary to my Grandmother for 11 and to my wife for 21 years! A loyal trusted and faithful friend and a thorough gentleman. With best love to Alix and the children (what is the Railway doing?) believe me dearest Nicky,

Ever your devoted friend and cousin

WILLY.

LXIX.

Neues Palais, 12/I, 1912.

Dearest Nicky

This letter will be brought to you by Gen. count Dohna² just returned from India. He

¹ Herr Bothe von dem Kneesebeck, who died suddenly at Cassel two days before this, was Assistant Master of Ceremonies charged with the arrangements of the Diplomatic Corps, and a senior official in the Household of the Empress, whom he had accompanied to England the previous May. He entered the Court Service as a member of the Household of the old Empress Augusta.

² Count Alfred Dohna-Schlobitten, of whom more is heard in letter No. LXVIII. After all these years—the Durbar was held in 1903—the pageantry of the great Indian ceremonial still floats in the Kaiser's imagination.

was present at the Durbar and will be able to give you vivid descriptions of the splendid and gorgeous scenes he took part in. His wife, who is staying since a few months at Petersburg to arrange his home for returning husband, will I am sure and hope be as agreeable to you and your court as he. She writes very happy letters about the kindness shown to her by the society. As he is only just out of the tropics and the change to your climate with 20° being very sudden, I crave your condescension to think of him when opendoor ceremonies in winter are on the programme, as he is very thin. Being bald too I suggested a warm wig for the "Blessing of the water"! You can decide which colour it is to have!

I once more send you my sincerest wishes for a happy New Year, joining in your hopes and prayers to Heaven that He may grant us a peaceful one; well knowing that our sentiments in this point are identical, for our 2 countries. I hope that Xmas eve went off well and that no accidents happened with my gifts; especially I hope that the little "tummies" will be none the worse for their own cooking.

Is the electric railway of last year still in good order?

I was very sorry when I heard of the death of poor Gen: Stroukow,¹ he was an excellent man

¹ General Alexandre Petróvitch Stroukow, a well-known Cavalry officer.

and an old and cherished acquaintance of mine and a loyal friend.

With my best wishes also for Alix and the children, from whom I had through Olga such a nice telegram, I remain Ever

Your most affate friend and cousin

WILLY.

LXX.

Rominten,¹ 3/X, 1912.

Dearest Nicky

May I venture to call your attention and also your interest to a plan which has already occupied my mind since some years. During my stay at Rominten I have minutely studied the question of

¹ The Royal hunting lodge in East Prussia was built on a hill above the hamlet occupied by the foresters who guard the almost primeval forest on Rominten Heath, which covers an area of 69 square miles, and extends close to the Russian frontier. It was not until 1890 that the ex-Emperor took a fancy for this hunting ground, where wild red deer and boar afford exhilarating sport. He used to sleep in a little inn in the forest before the Lodge was erected. It was constructed of wood by Norwegians brought specially from Norway, and the ornament and carving were mainly Scandinavian in character; the rafters of the roof, for example, come to a point in the shape of dragons' heads. Inside, the logs of the walls and ceilings were roughly trimmed and stained, and the furniture was in harmony with this simplicity. On the walls were pictures of hunting scenes, notably fine studies by Landseer. Among the paintings were two coloured copies of hunting subjects which the

the development of the frontier country on both sides in my vicinity.¹ I have come to the conclusion that the districts on both sides of our frontier are promising and may expect a hopeful future. But they must be opened up and also, if possible, be brought into relation to each other. On the enclosed railway map, a line is marked in red, it is a new railway which is going to be built running around the great Rominter Heide, so as to render the transport of wood easier than now. The line runs from Goldap, past Pablindsen to

caretakers of the lodge used to believe, and may still believe, were their master's own work. He, however, emphatically disclaimed their authorship. The principal object in the very small study (a literary workshop and no more) was a large table which the Emperor used chiefly when examining maps and plans. The decorations included a capital photograph of King Edward as Prince of Wales, looking most attractive in the uniform of a Prussian hussar.

¹ There is evidence that the Kaiser's project was carried out by the Russian Government. On the 1:1000,000 map printed by the Ordnance Survey in 1915 a narrow gauge railway is shown running from Suwalki across the German frontier to join the branch line at Szittkehmen, here referred to. Moreover, what seems to be another new narrow gauge line starts from Szittkehmen and goes in an easterly direction over the Russian border to Wizajny, thence northerly until it strikes a similar railway from Kalwarja to Stallüponen on the main line to Königsberg. On this map there is no indication that the projected line has been laid round the region of heath and forest ("the great Rominter Heide") between Goldap and Szittkehmen, but it may be assumed that this connection also was completed by the Germans before the War. In any case, these railways could have no strategic value, and only served the busy traffic which was here developing.

Szittkehmen where it strikes the branch line to Eydtkuhnen. The line will open up stone and gravel quarries and pits and will transport a large amount of wood out of the Rominten forest.

Now I venture to submit to your attention the idea whether it would not be a practical thing for your Government to lay a line from Suwalki to Pablindzen and there join our line. This would develop commerce between the two districts in a fine way. Pablindzen is already a point over which a very "*lebhafter Verkehr*" (busy traffic) to and fro has developed and is promising much more, in case a line came there. This plan has been discussed with your authorities since a considerable lapse of time, and I especially had talked it over with Mr. de Stremankow who was very much interested in it and thought it most necessary also in the interest of the Government of Suwalki. He promised me he would report to you in a favourable way about this scheme and prepared to take an active part in furthering it, when he was relieved from his post, and so there was an end to it. That is a great pity, because the frontier people are most anxious for the development of this question and he was quite acquainted with all the details of the question on both sides of the frontier and in permanent *rapport* with my authorities here. All this has stopped now, as his successor has as yet taken no steps to communicate with his colleagues across the frontier, though he is in office since 2 years.

Therefor the people from all sides begged me to lay the matter directly before you. This I have done. I beg your pardon for troubling you with such a miserable little frontier detail, but 24 years living among these people I have grown together with them and they have gained confidence in me. They are simple, quiet and laborious and as all frontier districts a little bit forgotten, and as it is a good deed to help such poor fellows on, I try my luck with you.

I had good sport—about 19 stags—but beastly weather excepting 2 days. Today snow and hail.

Best love to Alix and the children and Waidmannsheil (hunter's greeting) for you from

Ever your most affate cousin and friend

WILLY.

LXXI.

Berlin, 3/I, 13.

Dearest Nicky

The messenger leaves to-day with my present for you, Alix and the children. I hope they may please the august recipients. At the same time I send you my heartiest wishes for Xmas and a peaceful New Year. I earnestly hope and trust that 1913 may prove a peaceful one, as you telegraphed to me on New Years day. I think that on the whole the outlook is reassuring, and

that the discussions in London,¹ which are progressing favourably, will continue to be held in a conciliatory and friendly spirit, in which direction the foreign Policy of your Government as ably cooperates with all the other Powers.

I thank you for your message Tatischeff transmitted to me, who will already have returned my answer to you. I trust that also this matter may be brought to a satisfactory issue and the difficulties which have arisen overcome.

Your warminister Gen. Souhomlinow² paid me a visit on his return from Leipzig. He was most agreeable and most interesting in his descriptions of his deeds during the campaign 1877.

Up to now we have had a warm snowless winter here which allows us to indulge in nice long gallops on horseback, nearly every day, provided it does not pour with rain.

Goodbye dearest Nicky, my best love to Alix and the children, especially to the boy, who I hope is getting better, and believe myself

Ever your most affate cousin and friend

WILLY.

¹ The London Conference of Ambassadors had met (December 17th) in London, but their discussions did not make the favourable progress here anticipated.

² General Wladimir Alexandrovitch Soukhomlinow, Minister of War.

CHAPTER XX

THE FINAL LETTERS

The final letters are again of a gossipy character, but there is in letter No. LXXIII. a characteristic reference to "the damned Balkan muddle" which deprived the Kaiser "of the possibility of being at my heavenly paradise Corfu."

One after another of the various personages whom the Kaiser attached to the personal suite of the Tsar resigns, and now it is the turn of Count Dohna.

LXXII.

Berlin, 3/II, 13

Dearest Nicky

So many thanks for your kind wishes and the splendid gift you so kindly sent me. What a great surprise when I entered my birthday room! and saw the two grand pictures. It was really a charming idea of yours to send me those two beautiful originals which are of great artistical and historical value to us here, as they represent portraits of so many well known personalities here. These pictures gave me a real great pleasure, and I beg you to accept my most hearty thanks once more.

I am so glad to see by your letter, that the dear boy¹ is making good progress, but sorry that the state of Alix's health is not satisfactory. I am sure the weeks she spent in tending the boy, must have been most trying; but confidently hope that rest and a cure on the Crimea will soon put her to right again.

I fervently hope with you that the Balkan troubles may soon be finally arranged without further complications, and am most anxious to cooperate with you for that purpose. Of course Austria as a near neighbour to those parts has interests to look after. But I am under the impression that in doing so, she does not reclaim anything for herself, but only wishes to make sure, that no readjustments of the map may occur which might turn over a danger to her in future.

Adalbert² is again out of bed, and to-morrow Dona³ will again take up her quarters together with me. Thank God all went off so well. Best love to Alix and the children and believe me

Ever

Your most devoted and affate cousin

WILLY

¹ The Tsarevitch, whose health always caused concern, was then in the Crimea.

² The Kaiser's third son.

³ The German Empress.

LXXIII.

Berlin, 18/III, 1913.

Dearest Nicky

May I inform you that we now have definitely fixed the date for the wedding of our dear Sissy¹ for the 24th of May.

The main object of my lines is to convey to you and Alix our most cordial invitation to the wedding ceremonies. We both would only be too delighted if you could give us the pleasure of your presence and I fervently hope that you will be able to leave Russia for a few days to meet many of your relatives; as we have asked your dear Mama² Aunt Alix, Georgie and May, Waldemar etc. to enable all the "Geschwister" (brothers and sisters) to meet each other as well as Aunt Thyra.³

I am glad all your festivities⁴ went off so well and successfully, and that your boy could be present, and that he is progressing satisfactorily and will soon I hope have quite recovered. After Easter the Cumberlands⁵ are coming for a visit

¹ Princess Victoria Louise, who on May 24th married the Duke of Brunswick.

² The Dowager Empress Marie Féodorovna, who, however, was not present at the Royal wedding. King George and Queen Mary, but not Queen Alexandra, accepted the invitations here referred to.

³ Mother of the Duke of Brunswick.

⁴ From the 6th to the 9th of this March was celebrated in Petrograd and throughout Russia the 300th anniversary of Michael Romanoff's accession to the Russian throne.

⁵ The Brunswick family.

and then we go to Hamburg for a month, as the damned Balkan muddle has depried me of the possibility of being at my heavenly paradise Corfu !

With best love from Victoria and me to Alix and all the children believe me Ever your most devoted cousin and friend

WILLY.

LXXIV.

Berlin, 30/I, 1914

Dearest Nicky

Many thanks to you dear Alix and the children for your kind wishes and the lovely china pot which accompanied them. Thank God I could spend my birthday in happiness especially owing to the presence of dear Sophy and Georgy who had come all the way from Athens to spend the day with me ! I am most gratified that you still keep pleasant recollections of the visit you paid us last summer on the occasion of Sissy's wedding and you may be assured that we all most heartily reciprocate your kind feeling and remembrance.

I am so glad to hear that you all have benefited so much by your nice stay in the Crimea, and that especially Alix and the boy are so much better for their visit to the sunny South.

Remembering the interest, which you took

a few years ago, when you visited Hamburg and saw the cathedral I built there,¹ I venture to present you with a book, which I have caused to be published about the Chapel in the New Castle of Posen.² It is in the old Byzantine style, took 7 years work and was consecrated in our presence last August. It is copied from motives partly from Ravenna (Theodoric the Great's tomb) partly from Mon Reale and the Capella Palatina in Palermo.

The mission of Belossélsky, who brought the cravat for Alix's Dragoons was a very kind thought and most appreciated by the Regiment ; he is to lunch with me on Sunday.

With best love to Alix and the dear children believe me dearest Nicky

Ever your devoted cousin and friend

WILLY.

¹ Probably the large Church of St. Michael, burned down in 1906, and re-erected on the old lines. A bronze statue of Luther stands in front of the tower.

² The Schloss, a Romanesque structure of granite and sandstone, was erected 1905-10 ; and in the high tower is a chapel, decorated with mosaics, presumably that here referred to. But there is nothing Byzantine about Theodoric the Great's tomb in Ravenna.

LXXV.

Berlin, 26/II, 14.

Dearest Nicky

General Count Dohna,¹ who has the honour of being attached to your person has intimated to me his intention of leaving the service in the month of May. By the death of his father he has inherited a very large and extensive property as well as a very fine castle of Finkelstein;² a 100 years ago the Headquarter of Napoleon I before the battle of Eylau. He is absolutely necessary for the personal administration of it and so to my great regret I must accede to his wish. As *remplaçant* for him I intend to send you, with your kind approval, his Excellency Gen. Lieut. v. Chelius. He was regimental adjutant, when I commanded the Lieb Garde Husars, spent several years in Rome as militaire attache, commanded my old Hussar Regiment as Colonel with great distinction and was on my personal service since then. He is quite phenomenal as musician, and plays piano as well as Rubinstein d'Albert or any other great artist. He is very agreeable and quite discret and absolutely reliable; he is to accompany me to Corfu next month. He speaks fluently French, English,

¹ General Count Alfred Dohna-Schlobitten we heard of in letters Nos. LXVIII. and LXIX.

² The Castle of Finkelstein, in East Prussia, is about 20 miles east of the Vistula and 50 south-west from Preuss Eylau, where Napoleon fought and defeated the Russians and Prussians under General Bennigsen on February 8th, 1807.

Italian and Ancient Greek, and is one of my most intimate personal friends I have.

With best love to Alix and the children

Ever your

most affate cousin and friend

WILLY.



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The Kaiser's letters to
the Tsar

